

Preliminary Investigation Report  
for North Avenue East  
(Block 193, Lots 6.01, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and Block 195, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,  
7.01, 9, 10, 11) as a  
“Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment”



Township of Cranford  
Union County, New Jersey

December, 2017

Prepared by

**Harbor Consultants, Inc.**  
320 North Avenue East  
Cranford, New Jersey 07016  
Project Number 2017037.002

The original of this report was signed and  
sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12.

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Michael Mistretta, PP #00575900

DRAFT

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2. Planning Board Resolution dated [REDACTED], “authorizing Harbor Consultants, Inc., to prepare a map of the Study Area, a statement setting forth the basis for the investigation, and conduct a preliminary investigation of the Study Area to determine whether the Study Area meets the criteria set forth in the LRHL and should be designated as an area in need of condemnation redevelopment”.
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1. Township Committee Resolution dated December 31, 2006, adopting resolution 2006-327 (passed on December 12, 2006), following a study to designate Blocks 193 and 195 as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation.
  2. Township Committee Resolution dated February 12, 2008, adopting resolution 2008-126, rescinding the designation of Blocks 193 and 195 as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation.
  3. Cranford Special Improvement District Map dated 5/17/2010
  4. Improvement Implementation Plan for the Central Business District, Cranford, New Jersey by Wallace, Roberts, & Todd – 1985
  5. Downtown Cranford Vision Plan 2000
  6. Proposed Strategic Plan for Redevelopment in SID, by Cranford Downtown Management Corporation, Adopted June 1998
  7. Cranford Parking and Circulation Study 2005, by Vollmer
  8. Strategic Planning for Downtown Cranford – May 2017, by Cranford Downtown Management Corporation,
  9. Cranford Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan, September 2009, prepared by Stan Slachetka, PP, AICP of T&M Associates
  10. New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment, Final Draft, Volume I, New Jersey State Planning Commission, January 13, 2010
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## **I. Introduction**

The Township of Cranford is evaluating the need for the redevelopment of the properties located along North Avenue East, Block 193, Lots 6.01, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and Block 195, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.01, 9, 10, and 11, and has authorized a study be performed to determine whether the Study Area satisfies the statutory criteria pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6(b) (1) of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

On April 25, 2017, the Township of Cranford Township Committee adopted Resolution no. 2017-188E which states “the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford desires to have a preliminary investigation made on certain lands and premises within the Township of Cranford (“Township”) known as Block 195, in its entirety, and Block 193, Lots 6.01, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16 on the Township Tax Map to see if the area is in need of redevelopment and/or rehabilitation; and, WHEREAS, the Township intends to use all those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area, including the power of eminent domain.”<sup>1</sup>

The Resolution adopted by the Township Committee authorized the Planning Board “to undertake a preliminary investigation, as to whether the land identified as Block 195, in its entirety, and Block 193, Lots 6.01, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16 on the Township of Cranford Tax Map be classified as an area in need of redevelopment or an area of rehabilitation; and, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Board of the Township of Cranford shall conduct the aforesaid investigation in accordance with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6.”<sup>2</sup> A copy of the Resolution adopted by the Township Committee is contained in the Appendix of this report.

On -----, the Planning Board adopted a resolution “authorizing Harbor Consultants, Inc. to prepare a map of the Study Area, including a statement setting forth the basis for the investigation, the preparation of a map of the Study Area, and to perform a preliminary investigation of the Study Area to determine whether the Study Area is an area in need of condemnation redevelopment pursuant to the LHRL”.<sup>3</sup> A copy of the Resolution adopted by the Planning Board is contained in the Appendix of this report.

## **II. Study Area Location & Surroundings**

The North Avenue East properties, or the “Study Area,” consist of Block 193, Lots 6.01, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and Block 195, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.01, 9, 10, and 11, and are located in the Downtown Core Zone District of Township of Cranford as reflected on the Township’s Zoning Map, which was adopted in 2014. The Study Area consists of eighteen (18) parcels with a combined area of 3.95 +/- acres, which is based on Municipal Tax records. The Study Area is bounded by N Union Avenue to the northwest, Springfield Avenue to the northeast, and the NJ Transit railroad to the south. North Avenue East bisects the Study Area, with the parcels in Block 193 in the northern portion and the parcels in Block 195 across the road to the south. The entire Study Area is located within 800 feet of the NJ Transit Cranford Station.

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<sup>1</sup> Township of Cranford Township Committee Resolution adopted April 25, 2017

<sup>2</sup> Township of Cranford Township Committee Resolution adopted April 25, 2017

<sup>3</sup> Township of Cranford Planning Board Resolution adopted -----

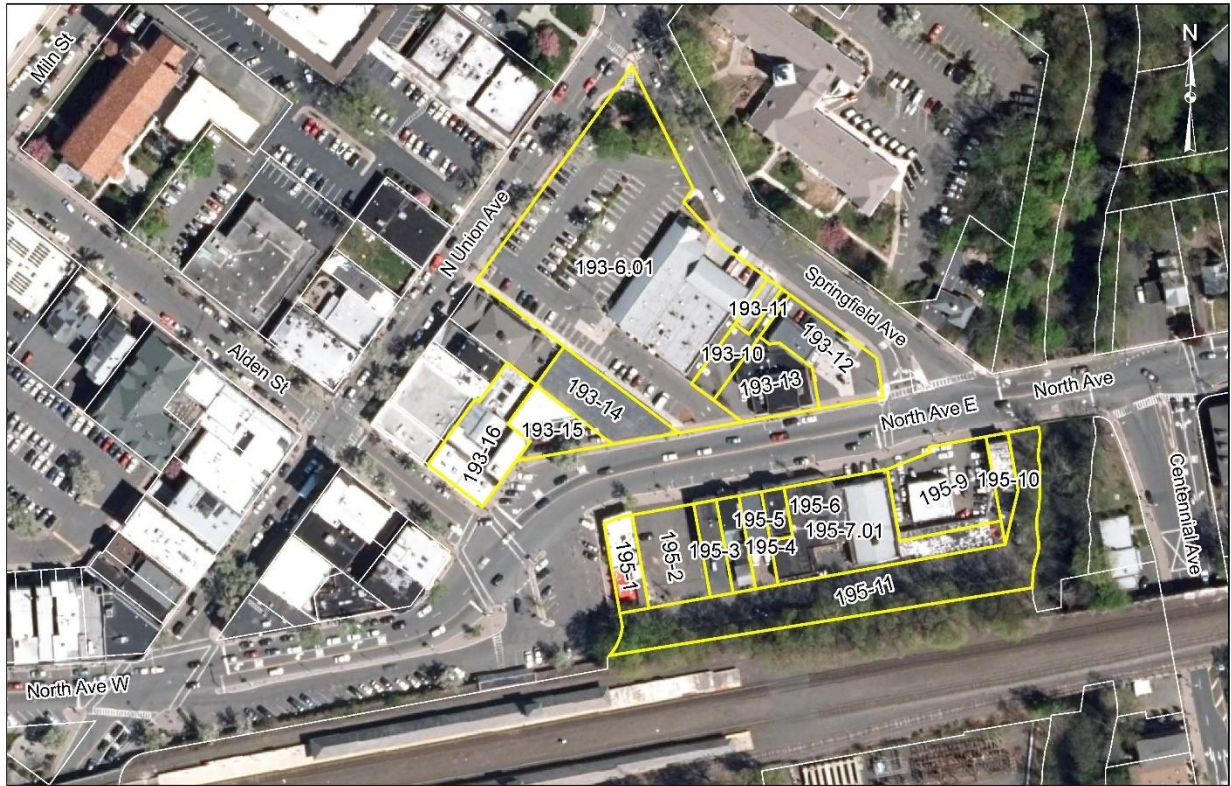


Figure 1: Aerial Map of the Study Area

Block & Lot	Address	Lot Area
Block 193, Lot 6.01	7 Springfield Avenue	1.38 +/- Acres
Block 193, Lot 10	Springfield Avenue	0.07 +/- Acres
Block 193, Lot 11	1 Springfield Avenue	0.03 +/- Acres
Block 193, Lot 12	45 North Avenue East	0.17 +/- Acres
Block 193, Lot 13	39-43 North Avenue East	0.15 +/- Acres
Block 193, Lot 14	27 North Avenue East	0.17 +/- Acres
Block 193, Lot 15	25 North Avenue East	0.10 +/- Acres
Block 193, Lot 16	23 North Avenue East	0.23 +/- Acres
Block 195, Lot 1	24 North Avenue East	0.07 +/- Acres
Block 195, Lot 2	26-30 North Avenue East	0.16 +/- Acres
Block 195, Lot 3	32 North Avenue East	0.06 +/- Acres
Block 195, Lot 4	34 North Avenue East	0.06 +/- Acres
Block 195, Lot 5	36 North Avenue East	0.06 +/- Acres



Block 195, Lot 6	38 North Avenue East	0.03 +/- Acres
Block 195, Lot 7.01	44 North Avenue East	0.36 +/- Acres
Block 195, Lot 9	48 North Avenue East	0.22 +/- Acres
Block 195, Lot 10	56 North Avenue East	0.05 +/- Acres
Block 195, Lot 11	26- 30 North Avenue East	0.57 +/- Acres
Total Area of Redevelopment Study Area		3.95 +/- Acres

The Study Area is included in the Township's Special Improvement District (SID), as well as the area that previous reports referred to as the "Central Business District" (CBD). These two areas have been a part of numerous studies and improvement efforts which will be discussed in more detail in Section IV. D.

The following photographs are from 2017 Google Maps "Streetview" Imagery, showing aerial building conditions from the southern part of the Study Area looking north along North Avenue East:

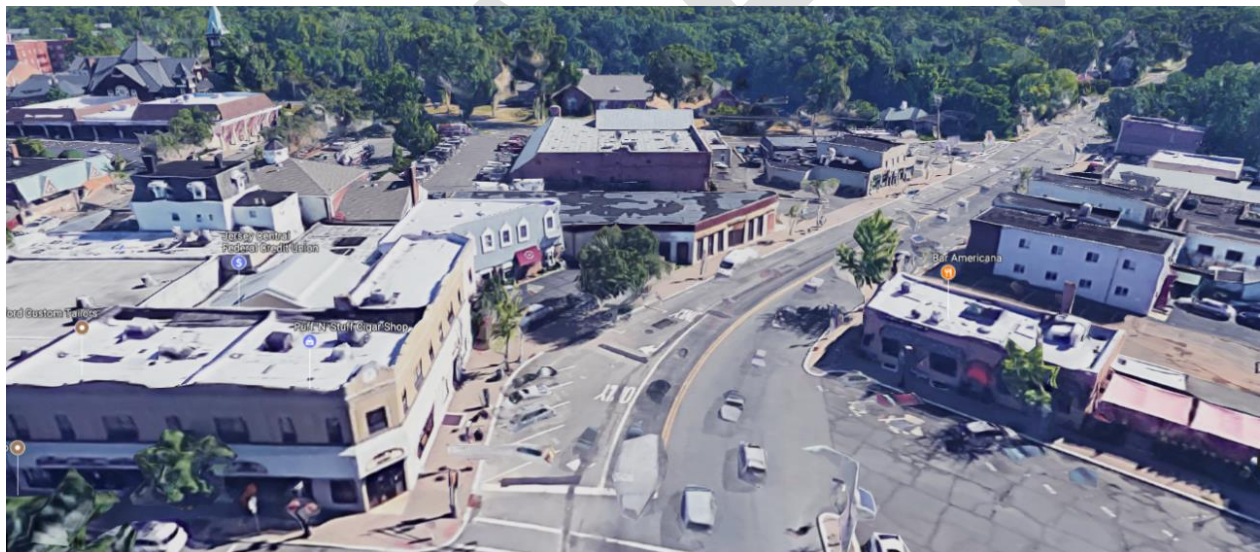


Figure 2: Aerial building conditions from the southern part of the Study Area looking north





*Figure 3: Aerial building conditions from the northern part of the Study Area looking south*

The limits of the study area are mapped on an Aerial Photograph Map, Township Zone Map, New Jersey State Plan Policy Map, FEMA Flood Map, and Township Tax Map. A copy of each of these maps is contained under Exhibits at the rear of this Report.

### **III. Description of Study Area Properties**

In preparation of this Preliminary Investigation, the authors of this report reviewed municipal records from the Township of Cranford Police, Fire, Construction, Planning, and Zoning departments in order to gain a better understanding of the history and physical condition of the structures and properties within the Study Area. In addition to reviewing records, representatives from Harbor Consultants, Inc. met with Township of Cranford staff to review past planning efforts within the Study Area and surrounding neighborhood. The Planners conducted site visits from July 14, 2017 through December 1, 2017 in order to further understand and observe the Study Area's existing conditions.

The complete municipal records are included in the Appendix of this report

#### **A. Block 193**

There are eight (8) properties in Block 193 located within the boundaries of the Study Area which are bounded by Springfield Avenue to the northeast, North Avenue East to the south, N Union Avenue to the northwest, and Alden Street to the southwest. The combined area of this portion of the Study Area is approximately 2.3 +/- acres.

The Township of Cranford Municipal Building is across Springfield Avenue from the Study Area. The remainder of the Study Area is predominantly surrounded by commercial uses.

#### **Block 193, Lot 6.01 (7 Springfield Avenue)**

The lot is owned by the Township of Cranford and consists of a municipal parking lot (Mayor's Park Lot: Lot # 1) and the township fire station. The parking lot and the fire house, together, account for about 95% of the impervious coverage on the Lot.



*Figure 5: Photograph, View of Block 193, Lot 6.01 from across Springfield Avenue*



*Figure 4: Photograph, view of the Municipal parking lot as seen from the sidewalk along Springfield Avenue*

The fire station is a one storied brick buidling and fronts onto Springfield Avenue. The south-eastern portion of the building, houses the fire vehicles, and is taller than the north-western portion of the station, which is the Cranford Fire Department office.

The surface parking lot located on the west and south of the fire station, making an “L” shape, is black topped and has three ingress/egress points, one each onto Springfield Avenue, N Union Avenue, and North Avenue East. This parking lot has approximately 210 feet of frontage on Springfield Avenue which distrupts the streetscape and pedestrian environment which is vital to the success of a walkable downtown. The parking lot is designed to accommodate approximately 90 cars in 5 rows. The surface at the entrances onto North Avenue East and Springfield Avenue are cracked, uneven, and have potholes. The Northern most portion of the parking lot, the corner at the intersection of Springfield Avenue and N Union Avenue is landscaped and has a gazebo, and park benches which are well shaded by trees. The

parking lot is abutted on the south by Center Point at Cranford, which contains office suites, and there is no visual buffer between the two.

The parking lot also accommodates a fueling station along the rear if the Cranford Fire Department building and is adjacent to the ingress/egress onto North Avenue East. This fueling station is presumably used by the fire department vehicles. The relatively narrow strip accommodates one row of parking, a fueling station, and a driveway for entry/exit. When a vehicle is refueling or fuel is being delivered, this makes the parking or movement along this strip very difficult because while a vehicle is fueling or while fuel is being delivered to the fueling station, circulation is obstructed. When the fueling station is in use it interferes with the ability to properly use the parking in the aisle across from the fueling station or the driveway used to access ingress/egress located on North Avenue East.

Previous studies commissioned by the Township of Cranford have demonstrated a shortage of parking, and that the existing parking facilities are not meeting the needs of the Township and is obsolete. The Township has demonstrated their commitment to improving parking and the downtown environment through the contruction of municipal parking in the Cranford Crossing project located on South Avenue, which, like the Study Area, is located within the Downtown Core District and is also within the limits of the SID. The use of surface parking in the downtown is the antithesis of Cranford’s demonstrated efforts to promote development in the downtown which consists of structured parking, and a mix of uses including office, retail, and residential to serve the needs of Cranford residents while simultaneously attracting visitors from neighboring municipalities. The approximate center of Lot 6.01 is approximately 525 feet from the Cranford NJ Transit station. This location makes it particularly well suited for mixed use higher density development.

Municipal records indicate that there have been applications relating to the maintenance of the fire house. There have not been any significant modifications or renovations to the property in the past ten years. A review of environmental records from NJDEP contained within Section V. of this report indicates that Lot 6.01 is a Known Active Contaminated Site.

<b>Table 2: Municipal Records for 193-6.01</b>		
<b>Fire Records</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Incident</b>	<b>Notes / follow up actions</b>
1999, 2009, 2014, 2016	Files/ declares Right to know	Stores hazardous materials/ products on-site
10/20/1988	waste oil contamination in water retention basin	contained
4/17/1996	Leaking UST system, spill - 25 to 30 gallons. contamination of land	
4/22/1996	UST tank & line testing - regular tank line failed	test well installed
4/22/1996	3 monitoring wells installed in response to above	
5/7/1996	monitoring wells drilled	
8/23/1988	drainwater, oil seepage	
10/12/2016	trouble call - valve tamper (?) in trouble	adjusted and system back to normal
11/12/2000	oil spill in parking lot	terminated

### **Block 193, Lot 10 (Springfield Avenue)**



*Figure 6: Photograph, view of flag-lot 193-10 which is being used as parking for 193-13*

Based on municipal tax records, Lot 10 is owned by Tuck Sing Continental Inc. Lot 10 is a flag-lot which fronts onto Springfield Avenue via a narrow driveway.

The Lot is undeveloped and vacant. It appears to be used as parking and loading/unloading area for the neighboring businesses on Lot 13, which shares the same ownership. The surface of the Lot is black-topped asphalt and appears to be very uneven. The Lot is completely impervious. During the site visit on

July 14, 2017, it was observed that the Lot was primarily being accessed through North Avenue East, via Lot 13, even though technically the point of ingress/egress for Lot 10 should be on Springfield Avenue.

There has been very little activity related to this parcel. The only records which were identified related to Lots 10 & 13. Based on the review of municipal records Lot 10 has only had improvements or changes



in conjunction with neighboring Lot 13. Records indicate that Lots 10 & 13 have been utilized together for a minimum of over 25 years.

**Block 193, Lot 11 (1 Springfield Avenue)**



*Figure 7: Photograph, side view of 193-11, Cranford Animal Hospital from along Springfield Avenue*



*Figure 8: Photograph, view of 193-11, Cranford Animal Hospital from across Springfield Avenue*

Lot 11 is developed with a one storied brick building which fronts onto Springfield Avenue, which based on municipal tax records was built in 1935, and is owned by Cranford Pet Vet LLC. It. The building which is currently being used as a veterinary clinic, covers the entire Lot. Review of construction records indicate that the building has undergone maintenance updates over the past ten years, and that it has continued to pass initial building inspections, without the need for a follow up inspection.

**Block 193, Lot 12 (45 North Avenue East)**



*Figure 9: Photograph, view of 193-12, the gas station from along Springfield Avenue – noticeable "FOR RENT" sign in the window of the accessory structure*

Lot 12 is a corner lot which fronts on North Avenue East and Springfield Avenue. Based on municipal tax records, this Lot is owned by Springfield Avenue BP LLC, and the building was built in 1957. This Lot is currently developed with an operating gas station and an associated, non-operating garage. Gasoline service stations are not permitted in the Downtown Core district, this business is a pre-existing non-conforming use and the lot is completely impervious.

The gas station can be entered from North Avenue East or Springfield Avenue.

The gas station is spartan with only two filling stations. The filling stations are surrounded by plenty of space for circulation.



Figure 10: Photograph, view of 193-12, the gas station accessory structure from along Springfield Avenue

The associated store on the Lot is a one storied building. The building is set back from the sidewalk edge and could presumably accommodate some parking in front of the building. The building is vacant with a “For Rent” sign. However, during the site visit on July 14, 2017, it was observed that the door leading to the southern portion of this building was open and that portion of the building seemed to be used by the gas attendant as a rest area and an office. There is another door leading to the northern portion of the building that was locked.

From historical Google imagery it could be determined that the associated garage space was used as a car service/ auto repair space.

Review of municipal records indicated tha the service station received approval to be remodeled in 1971 and that there have been construction application permits approved for maintenance and minor improvements such as roof replacement and signage. Health records mirror similar results as the environmental record review contained in Section V. of this report. The property is listed on the Active Sites with Confirmed Contamination list aquired through NJDEP Data Minor which is consistent with the property’s use as a gasoline service station.

Table 3: Municipal Records for 193-12		
Police Records		
Date	Incident	Notes / follow up actions
2/1/2016	Dispute-Verbal	Walk-in reports a dispute over gasoline. No problem on scene, vendor and driver worked things out.
2/23/2015	Theft of Services	Walk in reports theft of gas
Health Records		
Date	Incident	Notes / follow up actions
		550-gallon waste oil UST was closed in May 2016 and a No Further Action, Unrestricted Use- response Action Outcome document was executed on October 21, 2016
3/28/2003	gasoline was released (spilled) - soil contamination	4 tankfield wells showed vapor and groundwater recovery well showed contamination
7/26/1992	diesel fuel was spilled - fuel tank of a locomotive was leaking. Contamination of land.	
	7/21/2011 groundwater contamination was confirmed through laboratory testing, and	

	the contaminants exceed Vapor Intrusion Ground Water Screening Levels. 30 feet of dissolved petroleum hydrocarbon contamination in groundwater. Vapor Intrusion pathway is a concern at or adjacent to the site.	
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#### Construction Records - APPLICATIONS

<u>Permit Issue Date</u>	<u>Permit Number</u>	<u>Work type</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Close Date</u>
4/26/2016	16-0436	Demolition Flood Zone Removal Of 550 Gal UST	Open	
4/13/2015	15-0372+A	Alteration	Open	
4/13/2015	15-0372	New Construction 20' X 33' Twin Post Steel Canopy: Phase I Only	Open	
1/30/2012	12-0156	Alteration New Roof	CA and Close date issued	1/28/2013
3/7/2000	00-0191	New Construction Kisok 3' X 5'	CA and Close date issued	7/14/2000
2/10/2000	00-0116	Alteration 6' X 8' Sign	Closed with date	8/30/2013
11/18/1997	97-1175	Alteration Repair Roof	Closed with date	8/30/2013

#### Zoning Board Applications

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Meeting with testimony held on 4/2/1990 and 4/16/1990. Applicant Withdrew	Matthew & Michele Porter	Expansion of a nonconforming use with a front yard variance (VI.C. 6.) to erect a canopy less than five feet (5') from property line and a sign waiver to place three (3) signs on canopy (VC.8. b.(4).
Approved on 1/10/2000 subject to the 3'x4' ancillary sign shall not be anything other than gasoline price promotion related.	Alexander Bukham	Variance: To install a sign on an existing pylon that will exceed total permitted square footage, sign already located too close to property line and to add an ancillary sign to the pole.

#### Planning Board Applications

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Approved 4/7/1971 see minutes, subject to the following: Removal of the American sign on the front of the building. Brick veneer on the three sides of the building	American Oil Company	Remodel Service Station - (Colonial Front & Side)



and the continuation of the mansard roof along the three exposed sides; and the Board further requested the applicants to give serious consideration to the elimination of the gable.		
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### **Block 193, Lot 13 (39-43 North Avenue East)**



*Figure 11: Photograph, view of 193-13, from across North Avenue E*

Municipal tax records indicate that Lot 13 is owned by Tuck Sing Continental LLC, and the building was built in 1926. The Lot is completely impervious and is developed with a two-storied building with a brick façade and stucco sides. The second story is offset from the sides and the rear of the first story, therefore, the middle section of the building is two-storied while the end portions are one-storied. The first story consists of 4 different businesses – a tanning salon, a restaurant, a hair salon, and two restaurants. The second story appears to be residential. The building covers about 80% of the Lot.

The Air conditioning units of the establishments on the ground floor of the building jut out from the building onto the sidewalk. The sides of the building are not covered in the same brick façade as the front of the building. The east side wall of the building, bordering the gas station, is clearly visible from North Avenue E and Springfield Avenue and the west wall is easily visible to vehicles and pedestrians traveling east on North Avenue East. The blank walls are inconsistent with the desired design and streetscape within the Special Improvement District.

The addition of second story apartments to the building was approved in 1999. Since the approval was for an addition, presumably prior to the approval the building was only one story.

Table 4: Municipal Records for 193-13				
Police Records				
Date	Incident	Notes / follow up actions		
2/14/2016	Fire call/Water Condition	Sgt. Luedecker reports an interior water condition. Requesting FD. Officer requests building rep. Qing Li, be contacted for building entry. Eng2 reports hazard inside building. Run-off water is from cleaning earlier in the night. Building rep will put down salt for ice condition outside building.		
Construction Records - APPLICATIONS				
Permit Issue Date	Permit Number	Work type	Status	Close Date
1/14/2014	13-1567+6	Alteration Electrical Subpanel for Bento Sushi Restaurant	Closed with date	2/11/2014

1/9/2014	13-1567+A	Alteration Electrical Alterations for Bento Sushi Restaurant	Closed with date	2/11/2014
12/19/2013	13-1567	Alteration Tenant Fitout For Bento Sushi Restaurant	CO and Close date issued	2/11/2014
10/13/2009	09-0974	Alteration Stucco	Open	
1/10/2005	05-0030	Alteration Paint, New Ceiling Blocks, Counter, Floor	CA and Close date issued	12/19/2007

#### Construction Records - VIOLATIONS

<u>Notice Date</u>	<u>Compliance Date</u>	<u>Subcode</u>	<u>Infraction</u>
2/16/2000	2/28/2000	Administrative	Notice of Violation and Order to Terminate Failure to Request Final Inspections NJAC 5:23-2.31 PERMITS #99-0310, #99-0246, #98-0988, #98-0821, #98-0816 Failure to Obtain Permits for Upstairs Apartments Building Department 908-709-7213

#### Planning Board Applications

<u>Block &amp; Lot</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
193 10 & 13	41 North Avenue East	Approved on 8/15/1990 with the following conditions: preliminary and final approval granted with a sign exception located on the westerly elevation second floor subject to site plan dated 7/25/1990 and revised 7/27/1990 Job No. 90.071 and that the applicant work with the Township Engineer regarding submission of construction grades of the parking lot, exception granted for concrete curbing within the parking lot, a stop sign installed at the Springfield Avenue exit of the property and a six-month review of lighting after issuance of a certificate of occupancy.	Louis Consalvo	

#### Planning Board Applications

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Approved with conditions on 3/17/1999	Tuck-Sing Continental	Preliminary & Final Site Plan Approval to construct an addition and use variance for apartments in the B-2 zone.

**Block 193, Lot 14 (27 North Avenue East)**



Figure 12: Photograph, view of 193-14, from along North Avenue E, noticeable blank wall and signs

From municipal tax records, this Lot is owned by the Township of Cranford and the building was built in 1920. From property deed records, the property was owned by MDTV Realty and was sold to the Township of Cranford in 2015. The property was previously a commercial use.

The Lot consists of a one-story building that is vacant, abandoned, and boarded-up. The building covers the entire Lot

making it completely impervious. Historical Google Streetview imagery dating back to August 2013 shows the building boarded up indicating it has been vacant at least since then. The building front, along North Avenue East shows some signs of cracks and disrepair, primarily in those areas that would have been occupied by signboards. However, the boards used to board-up the building appear to be relatively new. The brick façade of the building appears to be peeling-off in places. Due to the shape of the building, and the neighboring properties, the northeast side wall of this building is clearly visible from North Avenue East, in addition to the frontage, and currently it is boarded-up and does not contribute positively to the streetscape and downtown environment.

Construction records indicate that it was determined that the roof of this building collapsed due to truss failure in 2009 and this building was deemed to be unsanitary and pose a threat to the safety of the community due to the missing roof and was an “Imminent Hazard” in 2010. Google aerial imagery indicates that the roof has since been replaced, however construction records indicate that the application for alteration of the roof is still open.

Table 5: Municipal Records for 193-14				
Construction Records - APPLICATIONS				
Permit Issue Date	Permit Number	Work type	Status	Close Date
7/9/2010	10-0636	Alteration Roof	Open	
12/18/2009	09-1242	Alteration Remove Repair Existing Roof After Truss Failure	Open	
Construction Records - VIOLATIONS				
Notice Date	Compliance Date	Subcode	Infraction	
12/3/2009		Administrative	Notice of Unsafe Structure	
3/26/2010	4/16/2010	Administrative	Notice of Violation and Order to Terminate NJAC 5:23-2 .31 Failure to Comply with A Verbal Directive from The Code Enforcement Agency To	

			Replace The Roof Structure That Was Removed Due To Failure or Demolish Said Structure. Building Department 908-709 - 7213
9/1/2010		Administrative	Notice and Order of Penalty NJAC 5:23-2.2(C) Notice of Imminent Hazard. Violation of Sanitary Safety. Failure to Install Roof Covering on Structure. See Attached Building Department 908-709-7213 Total Penalty: 2000

**Block 193, Lot 15 (25 North Avenue East)**



*Figure 13: Photograph, view of 193-15, from across North Avenue E*

From municipal tax records, this Lot is owned by Ralph Brunette Inc. The Lot is completely impervious and consists of a two-storied building. The building is set far back from the sidewalk along North Avenue East and occupies about 50% of the Lot, the rear half of the lot. The front half of the lot is a black-topped parking area, presumably for the businesses or offices that could occupy the lower level of the building, and the residential apartments on the second story. However, the shape seems awkward and could presumably only fit a few cars.

During a site visit on July 14, 2017, there was a “For Lease” sign located on the lower level which appeared to be vacant. The lower level has bay windows projecting out into the parking area. Through the windows on the lower level, office furniture can be seen and the lower portion of the building does appear to be vacant. There is a door on the front of the building that leads up to the upper level which appears to be residential, and occupied.

Municipal records indicate that the construction of an addition was approved in 1983. Construction records dating back to 1993 indicate that there have been minor improvements over the years such as alterations to the roof, and the creation of a laundry room.

<b>Table 6: Municipal Records for 193-15</b>				
<b>Construction Records - APPLICATIONS</b>				
<b><u>Permit Issue Date</u></b>	<b><u>Permit Number</u></b>	<b><u>Work type</u></b>	<b><u>Status</u></b>	<b><u>Close Date</u></b>
		Alteration Awning	Pickup	
12/10/2015	15-1513	Alteration Interior Alteration(s)	Open	
7/30/2013	13-0762	Alteration Create Laundry Room	CA and Close date issued	11/6/2014
12/6/2011	11-2344	Alteration Roof	CA and Close date issued	11/19/2012
11/3/2008	08-1348	Alteration Water Heater	CA and Close date issued	4/24/2009
12/5/2005	05-1637	Alteration Tenant Fit Up	CO and Close date issued	5/17/2006

11/30/2005	05-1612	Alteration Awning	CA and Close date issued	3/10/2006
8/2/1996	96-0669		Closed with date	8/30/2013
5/24/1993	93-422	Alteration	Closed with date	8/30/2013
Construction Records - VIOLATIONS				
Notice Date	Compliance Date	Subcode	Infraction	
9/8/2006	9/25/2006	Administrative	Notice of Violation and Order to Terminate NJAC 5.23-2:31Failure to Obtain a Permit (Fire Panel) Building Department 908-709-7213	
2/27/2006		Administrative	Notice and Order Of Penalty NJAC 5:23-2.31 Final Inspections Not Requested - Occupancy Without Co Building Department 908- 709-7213 Total Penalty: 500	
Planning Board Applications				
Decision		Applicant	Purpose	
Preliminary and Final Approval 10/5/1983 - Approved		Ralph Brunette, Inc.	Construct an addition to existing building; variance to permit less than the minimum required rear yard setback.	

**Block 193, Lot 16 (23 North Avenue East)**



Figure 14: Photograph, view of 193-16, from across Alden St

Lot 16 is a corner lot which fronts on Alden Street and North Avenue east. Based on municipal tax records, the Lot is owned by 23 North Ave Association Goodman Realty. The Lot consists of a two-storied building with multiple occupants. The building entirely covers the lot making the lot is completely impervious. The lower level of the building, along Alden Street, appears to be retail and service establishments. Uses along North Avenue East and in the upper level, it appear to be primarily offices.

Lot 16 is located less than 300 feet away from the Cranford train station, and is easily visible to vehicles and pedestrians exiting the station. Its prominence at the northeast of the intersection makes it a part of the gateway to the northern portion of Cranford's downtown from the train station.

Municipal records indicate that there have been some updates and improvements to the property, most of which are still open construction applications.

<b>Table -7: Municipal Records for 193-16</b>		
<b>Police Records</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Incident</b>	<b>Notes / follow up actions</b>
10/30/2016	Fire Call	Lt. Marino got a report of what sounded like an explosion in the basement, nothing was showing when first checked.



		ENG2 Company deemed that the water heater is safe and the area is clear.
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#### Construction Records - APPLICATIONS

<u>Permit Issue Date</u>	<u>Permit Number</u>	<u>Work type</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Close Date</u>
		Alteration 3 Ton Roof Top Unit	Prior Approval	
		Alteration Electrical Alterations (Install Outlet For Tele/Data)	Pickup	
8/10/2017	17-0905	Alteration Roof 4 Alden	Open	
1/19/2017	17-0062	Alteration Water Heater	Open	
10/25/2016	16-1242	Alteration Water Heater	Open	
9/23/2016	16-1108	Alteration HVAC - 2 RTUs	Open	
8/17/2016	16-0941	Alteration Gas Boiler	CA and Close date issued	9/1/2016
4/25/2011	11-0415	Alteration Wall	CA and Close date issued	6/23/2011
11/23/2010	10-1243	Alteration Interior Fitout	CA and Close date issued	4/27/2011
1/13/2009	08-1380	Alteration Rooftop HVAC	Closed with date	8/30/2013

#### Planning Board Applications

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Approved 9/16/1981	Joanne Kreisberg	Conditional Use in the B-1 Zone
Approved 10/16/1974	Richard Chodosh	Alteration of existing building (stores)

### B. Block 195

There are ten (10) properties which make up the entirety of Block 195 located within the boundaries of the Study Area. Block 195 is bounded by North Avenue East to the north, the Rahway River to the east, NJ Transit Railroad tracks to the south, and Alden Street to the west. The combined area of this portion of the Study Area is approximately 1.65 +/- acres.

#### Block 195, Lot 1 (24 North Avenue East)



Figure 15: Photograph, view of 195-1, from across the parking space

From municipal tax records, the Lot is owned by 24 North Ave East LLC and the building was built in 1935. The Lot consists of a one-storied restaurant building and has an outdoor seating area in the rear. The building and the seating cover the entire lot and the lot is completely impervious. The restaurant building has a rustic aesthetic and does not appear to be shabby or in disrepair.

Bar Americana does not appear to have any parking on-site and it is therefore presumed that the restaurant uses neighboring municipal parking lots for its parking requirements.



Review of municipal records indicated that the outdoor dining area has existed since the early 1990s and that renovations to the interior of the building have been undertaken within the last three years.

Table 8: Municipal Records for 195-1				
Fire Records				
Date	Incident	Notes / follow up actions		
10/3/2011	3 violations	emergency lighting, fire alarm test, cooking suppression system inspection		
Health Records				
9/12/2014	Unrestricted Use - No further action letter	Heating oil UST		
10/27/1992	abandoned UST was discovered with water and an oily film			
7/24/2014	oil heating liquid UST was discovered and removed			
Construction Records - APPLICATIONS				
Permit Issue Date	Permit Number	Work type	Status	Close Date
10/6/2015	15-1207	Alteration Interior Alteration(S) Bar Americana	CO and Close date issued	3/15/2016
8/12/2015	15-0963	Alteration Interior Demolition Demo Interior Walls	CA and Close date issued	12/4/2015
7/ 14/ 2014	14-0833	Demolition Removal of Underground Storage Tank NJDEP # 14-07 - 24-1500-33	CA and Close date issued	9/22/2014
2/26/2007	07-0183	Alteration Furnace	CA and Close date issued	5/2/2007
12/12/2005	05-1680	Alteration Sign	CA and Close date issued	2/8/2006
3/22/2005	04-0454	Alteration Patio Floor, Brick Walls	Closed with date	8/30/2013
2/10/2004	04-0086	Alteration 1 Alum Signs 3' X 8' 1 Wood Sandblasted 60" X 30"	CA and Close date issued	11/24/2004
11/6/2003	03-1452	Alteration Install 15 Ff Counter Top	CA and Close date issued	8/21/2006
8/11/2003	03-0979	Alteration Smoke Detectors	CA and Close date issued	8/21/2006
11/26/1999	99-1248	Alteration Replace Fire Damaged Roof & Ceiling -	CA and Close date issued	7/14/2000

		Kitchen Hood Exhaust System			
Construction Records - INSPECTIONS					
<u>Date</u>	<u>Control Number</u>	<u>Permit Number</u>	<u>Subcode</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Result</u>
3/7/ 2016	C-15-01384	15-1207	Building	Final	Pass
3/4/2016	C-15-01384	15-1207	Fire	Final	Pass
3/1/2016	C-15-01384	15-1207	Plumbing	Final	Pass
3/1/2016	C-15-01384	15-1207	Fire	Final	Not Ready
2/16/2016	C-15-01384	15-1207	Plumbing	Final	Fail
1/6/2016	C-15-01384	15-1207	Electrical	Final	Pass
12/2/2015	C-15-01384	15-1207	Building	Final	Pass
11/24/2015	C-15-01262	15-0963	Building	Final	Pass
11/24/2015	C-15-01384	15-1207	Building	Framing	Fail
11/20/2015	C-15-01384	15-1207	Plumbing	Rough	Pass
Construction Records - VIOLATIONS					
<u>Notice Date</u>	<u>Compliance Date</u>	<u>Subcode</u>	<u>Infraction</u>		
4/14/2008		Administrative	Notice and Order of Penalty NJAC 5;23-2.31 Outdoor Structure Erected Without Prior Approval from DMC Or Zoning. Permits Were Not Obtained from Construction Office. Structure Must Be Remove. building Department 908- 709-7213 Total Penalty: 500		
Planning Board Applications					
<u>Decision</u>		<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Purpose</u>		
Approved with conditions on 6/5/1991		Coach & Four, Inc.	Exception from site plan review to allow dining tables outdoors		

### **Block 195, Lot 2 (26-30 North Avenue East)**



Figure 16: Photograph, view of 195-2, from across North Avenue E

Based on municipal tax records, Lot 2 is owned by the Township of Cranford and was purchased in 2015 from PGA-MV Realty LLC. A review of Google Earth Aerial Imagry dating back to 1995 indicates that it has historically been a surface parking lot.

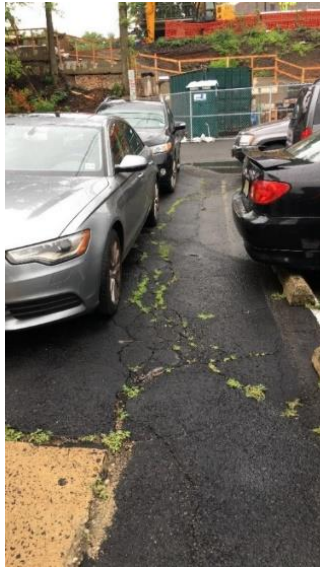
Lot 2 is a back-topped surface parking lot rendering it completely impervious, and appears it can be used as an unofficial egress/ingress point to Lot 11, which is municipal parking. The parking lot is uneven and has potholes. During a site visit on July 14,

2017, a portion of the Lot, about a third of it, is fenced off and is being used to store construction equipment for the work being carried out by NJ Transit. When a representative of Harbor Constultants.

Inc. went on site visits in November of 2017, they observed that the area was vacated of the construction material.

Table 9 Municipal Records for 195-2				
Construction Records - APPLICATIONS				
Permit Issue Date	Permit Number	Work Type	Status	Close Date
6/21/2004	04-0756	Alteration AC	Closed with date	8/30/2013
11/26/2002	02-1545+A	Alteration Suppression System	Closed with date	8/30/2013
11/25/2002	02-1545	Alteration Kitchen Suppression	CA and Close date issued	12/3/2002
11/6/2002	02-1417	Alteration Awning	CA and Close date issued	5/3/2006
10/25/2002	02-1315+A	Alteration Elect.Alt	Closed with date	8/30/2013
10/16/2002	02-1315	Alteration Lights for Sign	CA and Close date issued	11/25/2002
6/5/2002	02-0722	Alteration Recover Awning*Void*Business Closed	VOID	8/30/2013
Construction Records - VIOLATIONS				
Notice Date	Compliance Date	Subcode	Infraction	
8/31/2005		Administrative	Notice of Unsafe Structure	
Planning Board Applications				
Decision		Applicant	Purpose	
Approved 4/7/1971.		Thomas J. Sharkey	Remodel existing building as offices.	

**Block 195, Lot 3 (32 North Avenue East)**



*Figure 17: Photograph, view of 195-3, parking at the rear, surface noticeably cracked with weeds growing through*



*Figure 18: Photograph, view of 195-3, from across North Avenue E*

Municipal tax records demonstrate that Lot 3 is owned by Northport Financial LLC and the building was built in 1979. Municipal records indicate that the Planning Board approved a new office building in 1978. The front half of the lot, approximately 60%, which fronts onto North Avenue East is covered by a two-storied building. The entrance to the building is offset inwards to create an overhang at the entrance. There are two rear entrances to the building, one on each level. The rear half of the lot appears to be used as parking and is contiguous with neighboring Lots 2 and 11. The parking and rear of the building can be accessed through Lot 2 or Lot 11. The surface at the rear appears to be cracked and in disrepair with weeds growing through the cracks. The lot is completely impervious.

Municipal records indicate that there have not been many improvements to the property, the most recent construction permit was issued in 2008, and the application was closed in 2013.

Table 10: Municipal Records for 195-3				
Construction Records - APPLICATIONS				
Permit Issue Date	Permit Number	Work type	Status	Close Date
11/4/2008	08-II I O+ B	Alteration Water Closet	Closed with date	8/30/2013
11/3/2008	08-II I O+A	Alteration Gas Furnace	Closed with date	8/30/2013
9/16/2008	08-1110	Alteration Tenant Fit-Up	CO and Close date issued	1/27/2009
2/27/2001	01-0150	Alteration Sign 48 X 30	CA and Close date issued	5/2/2006
Planning Board Applications				
Decision			Applicant	Purpose
Final approval granted on September 6, 1978 - see minutes subject to conditions set forth on 6/21/1978 - as follows: 1. New concrete sidewalk			George Bishoff	New Office Building

should be extended to curb. 2. Two street trees (Bradford Pears) should be planted.		
Approved 4/19/1972 see minutes- subject to the use of brick veneer along the westerly wall for a distance of 27 feet from the building front	George Bishoff	Office Building

***Block 195, Lot 4 (34 North Avenue East)***



*Figure 19: Photograph, view of 195-4, from across North Avenue E*

From municipal tax records, the Lot is owned by Pia Properties LLC and the building was constructed in 1920. Approximately 80% of the lot is covered by a two-storied building in the front portion of the lot fronting on North Avenue East, and smaller structures at the rear. The main building is a seafood restaurant on the lower level and what appears to be residential above. There is a door/ gate leading to the upper level opening out on to the sidewalk along North Avenue East, which appears to be a later addition, and may indicate that this building was not originally designed to be utilized by two separate entities. There is a bay window which protrudes onto the sidewalk along North Avenue East on the lower level.

At the rear, there are accessory detached structures which appear to in a state of advanced disrepair with peeling paint, exposed electric

systems, rickety doors etc. There is also space for some parking at the rear, which is accessed via Lot 11. The principal structure, accessory structures, and the black topped parking in the rear of the lot render Lot 4 completely impervious.

There are very few municipal records relating to Lot 4. Therefore, this report was unable to determine when the staircase to access the second floor, or the accessory structures in the rear of the property were constructed.

<b>Table 11 Municipal Records for 195-4</b>		
<b>Planning Board Applications</b>		
<b>Decision</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Approved on 11/15/1989 subject the colors of the building approved by the Sign & Façade Committee, approval from the Fire & Building Department of the door swinging outward and if not permitted the applicant must return to the Planning Board with modified plans, the projection of the window to be verified by the Township Engineer and Building Inspector and not to extend in the street right-of-way.	Michael Marino (Marino's Seafood Restaurant)	Exception from site plan review for façade renovation.

**Block 195, Lot 5 (36 North Avenue East)**



Figure 20: Photograph, view of 195-5, from across North Avenue E

Municipal tax records indicate that Lot 5 is owned by Cranmount LLC. The lot is currently developed with a one-storied building on the front portion of the lot with parking in the rear making the lot completely impervious. The building houses a Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling business. Through the windows, it can be seen that the ceiling is at the standard height and there appears to be what could be an attic above the main level to give the building its taller appearance. The roof slopes down towards the back to reach the normal single storied height. Between

the side of this building and the side of the building on Lot 6 the hair salon, there is about 3 foot distance, and in the space between the side of this building and the building on Lot 4 the seafood restaurant, there is a staircase (from wall-to-wall) leading to the upper level on Lot 4 the seafood restaurant.

There are few municipal records related to this property. Analysis of records indicates that the addition was approved in 1984, and that there have been some approved and completed construction applications in order to back improvements or maintain the property.

Table 11: Municipal Records for 195-5		
Planning Board Applications		
Decision	Applicant	Purpose
Approved w/conditions 7/18/1984	Chapman Bros.	Construct addition to existing building.



**Block 195, Lot 6 (38 North Avenue East)**



*Figure 21: Photograph, view of 195-6, from along North Avenue E*

Based on municipal tax records, Lot 6 is owned by Ben-Elazar, Edan & Edan. Lot 6 is only 0.03 +/- acres and does not extend from North Avenue East through to Lot 11 like the majority of the lots within Block 195. The entire Lot is covered by a two-storied building that houses a hair salon at the bottom and what appears to be residential above it. The structure occupies the entire parcel making the lot completely impervious. The building is abutted by the building on Lot 7.01 the dry cleaners to the east and is separated from it by approximately 6 inches. Lot 7.01 wraps around the rear of the property, making it inaccessible to vehicles through the rear. There is no onsite parking for the property. Review of municipal records indicate that there has not been major renovations or updates to this property. A Table inclusive of municipal records received is located in the rear of this report.

**Block 195, Lot 7.01 (44 North Avenue East)**



*Figure 22: Photograph, view of 195-7.01, from along North Avenue E*

Municipal tax records indicate that Lot 7.01 is owned by Macrietta Realty Co Stauber Alan. The Lot contains a tall one-storied building. The building covers most of the Lot, about 85%, and extends behind the buildings on Lots 6 and 9. The building seems to be different individual smaller structures that are attached to each other to form a large building. There is parking in the front of the building between the structure and the front property line which covers the remainder of the lot, making the entirety of the lot impervious.

The building appears to be abandoned and in an advanced state of disrepair with portions of the ceiling material peeling off and hanging when looked in through the windows in the front along North Avenue East. There are weeds and plants growing out of the pavement in front of the entrance to the building. The façade is peeling and blank and appears to be in two colors. The space in front of the building is being used as parking for about 6 cars.



Figure 23: Photograph, rear of building on 195-7.01

At the rear, there are loading doors and the walls along the rear are graffitied. Deterioration to the rear of the building is particularly significant. There are large portions of the building wall which are missing due to prolonged discontinued use, vacancy, and general neglect. There are several places in the rear of the property which have significant weed growth, breaking through the impervious surface which covers the lot. The pipes along those walls seem to have burst and there is water flowing through them.



Figure 24: Photograph, DEP sign posted at the rear of 195-7.01

From the municipal parking lot located on Lot 11, what appears to be a storage area used to store Nitrogen can be observed. There are obvious signs of extreme disrepair.

Former operations conducted at the site from the late 1940s through 2008 include dry-cleaning services which used chemicals that were stored in USTs behind the building. During the closure of the USTs in 1998, discharge of contents was discovered in surrounding soil and ground water. Chemical constituents associated with the contamination include chemicals and their degradation products. The ground water contamination has been shown to have migrated off-site to the south and east of the site, towards the Rahway River. The extent of ground water contamination has been delineated both

horizontally and vertically and was found to not impact the river sediments or water.

Remedial actions at the site in the past have included closure of USTs, in-situ injections into ground water and source soils to degrade contaminants, and excavation of contaminated soil. Concentrations of contaminants in ground water at the source zone (former UST area) suggested the continuing presence of source soil. At the rear, there is a sign posted in 2009 that states the property is under environmental investigation and clean up in progress.

Table 12: Municipal Records for 195-7.01		
Health Records		
Date	Incident	Notes / follow up actions
8/31/2009	Posted remediation sign required by DEP stating that ENVIRONMENTAL	

	INVESTIGATION/CLEANUP IN PROGRESS AT THIS SITE			
9/15/2016	pre-foreclosure notice	\$109,242		
12/12/2013	Benzene - groundwater contamination, and land contamination			
1/20/1998	soil contaminated - improper disposal/ storage. Contamination of land and water - contaminated soil being stored on property for past four months. When it rains, the soil is washed into river (Rahway).			
7/22/1998	petroleum naphtha released. UST soil contamination. Land contamination. USTs removed, contamination found, cleanup in progress.			
6/19/2003	released/ dumped liquid waste onto pavement behind building. The location allows for the waste to drain directly into the storm sewer system and immediately discharge into Rahway river.			
Construction Records - APPLICATIONS				
<u>Permit Issue Date</u>	<u>Permit Number</u>	<u>Work type</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Close Date</u>
5/21/2013	13-0606	Demolition Remove 1,000 Gal Regulated Underground Tank DEP- Found During Remediation	Open	
5/20/2013	13-0601	Demolition Remove 2 1000-Gal Underground Tanks DEP: Found During Remediation	Open	

***Block 195, Lot 9 (48 North Avenue East)***



Figure 25: Photograph, view of 195-9, from across North Avenue E

Based on municipal tax records, Lot 9 is owned by Finocchiaro, Carmelo, and Rosemary. The Lot contains a one-storied building which is occupied by an auto repair/servicing workshop in the middle of the Lot which is surrounded by black topped space to house cars rendering the entirety of the lot impervious. The building occupies about 25% of the lot, and the exterior appears to be well maintained. Neighboring Lot 7.01 extends completely along the rear property line of Lot 9, rendering the property inaccessible from the rear.

However, the use of an auto repair shop in a downtown is an underutilization and inappropriate use of land, as demonstrated by Crandford's zoning ordinance which does not permit auto repair shops in the downtown. This property is a pre-existing nonconforming use. Review of municipal records indicates that there has been few alterations made to the property in recent years. The most recent alteration was to the stucco in 2011. All other records relating to alterations and updates to the property are dated prior to 2000.

<b>Table 13: Municipal Records for 195-9</b>				
<b>Construction Records - APPLICATIONS</b>				
<b>Permit Issue Date</b>	<b>Permit Number</b>	<b>Work type</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Close Date</b>
4/5/2011	11-0288	Alteration Stucco on Front Of Building	Closed with date	8/30/2013
2/2/1999	99-0054	Alteration Sign 31 SQ FT	CA and Close date issued	6/13/2006
12/1/1995	95-0999		Closed with date	8/30/2013
3/24/1995	94-0849	Addition	Closed with date	8/30/2013
<b>Zoning Board Applications</b>				
<b>Decision</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Purpose</b>		
Approved on 7/13/1998	Carmens Honda Repair	To amend a previously approved site plan		
Preliminary site plan approval granted on 7/26/1993. Variances granted on 7/26/1993	Carmen's Honda Repair	For site plan approval and expansion of a non-conforming use to construct an addition and property located in a flood fringe area.		

**Block 195, Lot 10 (56 North Avenue East)**





Figure 26: Photograph, view of 195-10, from across North Avenue E

Based on municipal tax records, Lot 10 is owned by Jacobs, Peter. The Lot contains a two-storied building which contains the Riverside Inn Bar. The building covers about 55% of the lot. There is a driveway adjacent to the building, which is located on Lot 11 which is a one-way exit onto North Avenue East from the municipal parking lot developed on Lot 11. In the front, along North Avenue East, there is outdoor seating with planters and umbrellas which are encroaching and take up most of the sidewalk in front of the building. The exterior walls look relatively well maintained but some cracks and a few deteriorating bricks could be observed. The rear of the property is covered in black topped and has another point of access to the building. The building and the black top in the rear make the property entirely impervious.

Review of municipal records reflect that the Riverside Inn was impacted by flooding during Hurricane Irene and submitted construction applications in order to repair damage sustained from the water.

Table 14: Municipal Records for 195-10				
Construction Records - APPLICATIONS				
Permit Issue Date	Permit Number	Work type	Status	Close Date
8/6/2015	15-0929	Alteration Flood zone Greasetrap	CA and Close date issued	8/19/2015
11/ 2/2011	11-1218+D	Alteration Flood - Alarm	Open	
10/26/2011	11-1218+C	Alteration Flood – Interior Renovation, Ductwork, AC	Closed with date	8/30/2013
10/14/2011	11-1218+6	Alteration Flood -Boiler & Water Heater	Closed with date	8/30/2013
10/13/2011	11-1218+A	Alteration Flood - Light, Sou Lets, Switches, Water Heater, Etc.	Closed with date	8/30/2013
9/16/2011	11-1218	Alteration FLOOD - 300 AMP Service & 100 AMP Subpanel	CA and Close date issued	11/16/2011



### **Block 195, Lot 11 (26-30 North Avenue East)**

Municipal tax records indicate that Lot 11 is owned by the Township of Cranford. The Lot forms an “L” shape and extends behind Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7.01, and 10 within Block 195 to the north Lot 11 bisects these lots and the NJ Transit Railroad tracks. Lot 11 is identified as Municipal Lot 3 (North Avenue) and contains 3 hour visitor and permit parking. The lot is an extended asphalt surface parking lot and is entirely impervious. The parking lot can be entered next to the intersection of North Avenue East and Alden Street next to the train station. The egress is located next to Riverside Inn located on Lot 10, and puts exiting vehicles onto North Avenue East. During a site visit on July 14, 2017, a portion of the lot towards the western end is fenced off and is being used as storage/ holding area for the ongoing work by NJ Transit on the railroad and/or the train station, but more recent site visits have noted the area is no longer fenced off.



*Figure 27: Photograph, view of 195-11, looking east from the parking lot next to 195-1*



*Figure 28: Photograph, view of 195-11, looking east from the parking lot adjacent to 195-1*

## **IV. Relevant Planning & Zoning**

### **A. Existing Zoning**

The entirety of the Study Area falls within the Downtown Core (D-C) Zone District. This zone was created in a 2014 update of zoning districts in Cranford based on recommendations of the section entitled “Future Land Use” in the 2009 Township of Cranford Master Plan. Previously the D-C District was comprised of multiple business and office zones. Zone districts were consolidated in order to “simplify rules, regulations, and standards within the nonresidential districts.”<sup>4</sup>

The Principal Permitted Uses in the D-C zone include the following:

- Artist and artisan studios and workshops (upper floors)
- Antique stores
- Apparel and accessory stores
- Apparel embroidery and printing stores

<sup>4</sup> Township of Cranford Master Plan, prepared by T&M Associates, adopted September 30, 2009, p. LU-4

- Art Galleries
- Bakeries
- Bars and taverns
- Beauty and barber shops
- Bicycle repair and sales shops
- Building supply stores
- Camera and photo supply stores
- Candy stores
- Child-care centers
- Coffee shops
- Computer repair and sales
- Cooking schools
- Dance and theatrical studios
- Delicatessens
- Educational services
- Electronic appliance repair shops
- Electronic repair and supply stores
- Essential services
- Eyeglass Sales and Repair
- Florists
- Fruit and vegetable stores
- Garden supply and hardware stores
- Gift, card, and novelty shops
- Grocery stores
- Hobby and game shops
- Home furnishing stores
- Jewelry stores
- Laundry and dry-cleaning services
- Liquor and package goods stores
- Luggage and leather goods stores
- Martial arts and instruction
- Museums and art galleries
- Musical instrument sales, rentals, and repair shops
- New and used book stores
- Offices: professional, business, administrative (upper floors)
- Office supply and support stores
- Paint and Wallpaper Stores
- Parking lots
- Party goods stores
- Performing Arts Studios (upper floors)
- Pet groomers
- Pet stores
- Pet supply stores
- Pharmacies
- Photograph studios
- Physical fitness studios and gyms
- Picture framing
- Religious goods stores
- Restaurant
- Secondhand and consignment stores
- Shoe and luggage repair
- Sidewalk cafes
- Spa
- Sporting goods stores
- Trophy shops
- Watch and clock repair
- Yoga studios

The Conditional Uses in the D-C zone include the following:

- Advertising agencies and website design companies
- Air conditioning and heating service and repair shops
- Banks and financial institutions
- Bed and breakfast hotel
- Convenience stores
- Hotels
- Institutional and public uses
- Insurance agents and brokers
- Offices: professional, business, administrative (1<sup>st</sup> floor)
- Public and Private garages (structured parking)
- Printing and publishing services
- Residential Apartments (upper floors)
- Security brokers
- Social service agencies
- Tax return preparation service
- Theaters
- Vending machines
- Veterinarian office

The Accessory Uses in the D-C zone include the following:

- Customary accessory uses
- Signs
- Parking facilities

Section 136-35 outlines the required provisions to be met for each of the conditional uses in the D-C zone. Most of these provisions relate to site plan requirements, parking requirements, and bulk standards, some of which are dependent on neighboring uses. Some of the provisions relate to parameters dictating when the conditional use is permitted, for example if the use is limited to the second story of a building.

### ***B. Review of Master Plan***

The Township adopted a Master Plan in 1979. This Master Plan and subsequent reexaminations call for growth in the downtown that emulates the traditional downtown scale. The Township's prior Master Plan efforts recognize that Cranford's traditional downtown incorporates many of the principles of Smart Growth: mixed uses, a variety of transportation options, a range of housing opportunities, and a walkable environment.

The Township Planning Board adopted the current Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan in September 2009, prepared by Stan Slachetka, PP, AICP of T&M Associates. The Township of Cranford Master Plan was intended to guide the growth and development of the Township over the course of six (6) years. Since the adoption of the Land Use Plan Element in 2009, an updated zoning ordinance was adopted in 2014 which consolidated many of the zones that now comprise the existing Downtown Core Zone District.

Some of the Master Plan goals related to the Study Area are to:

- Conserve and promote the economic vitality of the Downtown so that the core of Cranford remains healthy.
- Provide a parking strategy to accommodate all of the Downtown's constituents: commuters, office workers, shoppers and Downtown residents. Require adequate parking as a prerequisite to new development.
- Recognize the economic value of multi-story buildings within the Downtown. Encourage the fullest use of existing upper floors and the creation of additional upper-story floor space.
- Continue to develop commercial and business (i) in the Downtown, (ii) on North, South, and Centennial Avenues, and (iii) in existing centers of commerce.
- Continue to evaluate development opportunities that utilize Cranford's rail and bus lines in order to encourage an increase in mass transit usage.
- Encourage the development of a diversified economic base that generates employment growth, increases property values, and promotes the improvement of underutilized properties.
- Provide a wide range of housing to meet the needs of residents in diverse income groups.

- Concentrate higher density residential uses in the Downtown to take advantage of transportation infrastructure and require adequate parking as a prerequisite to new development.
- Encourage sustainable development practices.
- Require all development to be subject to rigorous environmental evaluation to minimize any potential adverse environmental impacts.
- Preserve floodplains to mitigate the adverse impact of flood events and to maintain the ecological health of stream corridors.
- Promote development in existing nonresidential areas that accommodate alternative modes of transportation and shared parking.
- Coordinate land uses and transportation investments to encourage alternatives to driving such as mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian pathways.
- Ensure that developers bear their share of infrastructure improvement required by the development.
- Maintain and enhance the appearance of all Township-owned properties.<sup>5</sup>

A redevelopment program for the Study Area would complement and further the goals of the Township Master Plan.

### **C. Affordable Housing Planning**

[Insert history of affordable housing in Cranford, and how the North Avenue Study Area plays an important role, does this need to be its own section, or addressed in the description of the study area section? To discuss with Planning Board]

### **D. Prior Downtown Planning & Revitalization Efforts**

The following is a brief summary of previous studies and development efforts carried out by the Township in order to revitalize the Downtown and promote economic development. Unfortunately, analysis of these studies is incomplete because many records and prior reports were lost during flooding caused by Hurricane Irene. Because the Study Area is centrally located in the Downtown, it has historically been part of the major focus on economic development efforts in that area of the Township.

Overall, the analysis largely showed that, despite efforts to revitalize the Downtown – including consultation through expert reports, Master Plan goals, and reinvestment - little improvement has occurred along the North Avenue corridor. Many of the following reports made similar conclusions and recommendations about the area, yet little action or change has taken place in order to achieve substantial successful redevelopment and reinvestment along North Avenue. As an additional point, the majority of the water and sewer infrastructure in the Downtown area is aging and in need of maintenance. Coupled with the historical flooding in the area, redevelopment presents an opportunity to prevent further damage while developing to meet the demands of the future.

#### **i. Designations Relevant to Downtown Core Zone**

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<sup>5</sup> Township of Cranford, New Jersey Master Plan by Stan Slachetka, PP, AICP of T&M Associates, adopted September 30, 2009.

## Special Improvement District designation 1985

The first notable initiative that the Township carried out for economic development in the area was designating a portion of the Downtown as a Special Improvement District (SID).<sup>6</sup> The SID, which was the first of its kind in New Jersey, allowed for a public private partnership to exist between the Township and the property/business owners which would promote improvements through investment and economic revitalization within the SID boundaries. All eighteen (18) of the properties included in the Study Area fall within the limits of the SID as reflected in Figure --. Subsequent to the SID designation, the Downtown Management Corporation, a Township of Cranford department responsible for the downtown, embarked on a series of improvements which included \$3.5 million dollars in streetscape improvements, new promotional events, and additional façade renovations. Despite this investment in the SID, the anticipated revitalization of the area and reinvestment by individual property owners never came to fruition.



Figure 29: Township of Cranford, Special Improvement District Map: Study Area Highlighted

<sup>6</sup> An improvement district is a defined area, in a larger city, that is authorized by state law (the Pedestrian Mall and Special Improvement District Act, N.J.S.A. 40:56-65, et seq.) and created by an ordinance of the local government to collect a special assessment on the commercial properties and/or businesses in that area, which provides a mechanism for the businesses of a community to organize as a single entity, to raise funds for activities that supplement municipal services, and to manage themselves to become a more effective shopping/dining/commercial destination. *From State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.*



In response to the stagnated economic climate, in 1998 the Cranford Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) hired David Milder of DANTH, Inc.,<sup>7</sup> a consulting firm specializing in economic revitalization, to do an intensive analysis that looked at existing businesses, where Cranford dollars were being spent, retail space and opportunities for developing new retail. In 1997, the average retail space in downtown Cranford was 1,800 square feet – “fine for specialty and boutique shops but not enough to lure restaurants and the kind of retailer residents wanted.”<sup>8</sup>

From this report, the DMC compiled a Proposed Plan for Redevelopment in the SID. The plan highlighted four areas within the SID which should be considered for redevelopment in order to combat the lack of larger spaces required for interested tenants within the Downtown. Two of the areas have since been redeveloped and exist today as the “Cranford Crossing” and “Riverfront” projects, both of which are located on South Avenue. In addition, Municipal Parking Lot #1, which is within Block 193, Lot 6.01, was also identified for redevelopment. The Proposed Plan suggested that Parking Lot #1 be converted into ground floor retail/office space that incorporated structured parking through either a deck or underground parking. This proposed redevelopment would “allow for an attractive and beneficial use of this property, in addition to providing needed retail and additional parking spaces.”<sup>9</sup>

Overall, as it relates to this Study, the use of redevelopment on South Avenue has been a successful tool for transformation into a viable and vibrant Downtown area, while the North Avenue section has largely remained unchanged despite the Township’s economic development efforts.

The DANTH report would later be leveraged by Cranford to obtain Smart Growth grants, and their Transit Village designation in 2003.<sup>10</sup>

### **Transit Village designation 2003**

In 2003, Township of Cranford was designated by the State as a Transit Village. The Transit Village Initiative (TVI) is a multi-agency Smart Growth partnership between the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and New Jersey Transit (NJT). The main focus of the Transit Village Initiative is to promote community revitalization around a transit hub, and other goals include reducing traffic congestion, and improving air quality by increasing transit usage.

Transit Village Designation provides a municipality with the following benefits:

- State of New Jersey commitment to the municipality's vision for redevelopment.
- Coordination among the state agencies that make up the Transit Village Task Force.
- Priority funding from some state agencies.
- Technical assistance from some state agencies.
- Eligibility for grants from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> A copy of this original report was not able to be analyzed because it was one of many documents lost during flooding caused by Hurricane Irene.

<sup>8</sup> Downtown Cranford: A Comprehensive Approach to Economic Revitalization, League of Municipalities Magazine, Kathleen Miller Prunty, August 19, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Proposed Plan for Redevelopment in SID, prepared by Cranford Downtown Management Corporation, dated 1998.

<sup>10</sup> Municipal Spotlight: TOD in Cranford Township, NJTOD, November 28, 2005. <http://njtod.org/municipal-spotlight-tod-in-cranford-township/> Retrieved November 22, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> State of New Jersey Department of Transportation. Retrieved from <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/village/faq.shtml> on October 4, 2017.

Cranford was able to receive grants due to their Transit Village Designation.

- \$200,000 in 2003 for a comprehensive parking and pedestrian study (Vollmer Report)
- \$165,00 in 2006 for pedestrian improvements on Walnut Avenue under the railroad bridge, as well as North Avenue in front of the train station<sup>12</sup>
- \$500,00 in 2011 local aid grant from the New Jersey Department of Transportation for pedestrian walkways across North Avenue to the NJ Transit station and landscaping improvements
- Projects build which meet Transit Village program requirements include Cranford Crossing and Riverfront Redevelopment Projects

### **Area in Need of Rehabilitation Designation, 2006**

In a letter dated October 19, 2006, T & M Associates stated that Block 193 and Block 195 on North Avenue met the criteria to be designated as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation pursuant to LRHL.

The T&M letter relied on a memorandum dated October 18, 2006, authored by the Township Engineer, Mr. Richard Marsden, P. E., which stated that the majority of the water and sewer infrastructure in the delineated area was at least 50 years old and in need of repair and maintenance; as such, the entire area qualified as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation pursuant to the LRHL.

Based on the recommendations of the T&M Study and the Township Engineer's letter, on December 31, 2006, the Township Committee adopted Resolution 2006-327 (passed on December 12, 2006) to designate Blocks 193 and 195 as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation.

### **Area in Need of Rehabilitation Designation Rescinded, 2008**

On December 31, 2006, the Township Committee adopted Resolution 2006-327 (passed on December 12, 2006) to designate Blocks 193 and 195 as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation. The rehabilitation designation was rescinded, however, with the passage of Resolution 2008-126 on February 12, 2008, as a Redevelopment Plan had not been formulated or adopted since the designation, and since the Township looked to address the revitalization plans through the process of preparing a comprehensive Master Plan, the first in nearly 30 years. The Resolution stated that "it is in the best interests of the Township to have the new Masterplan address issues on a Township-wide basis, including this area."

## **ii. Previous Studies Relevant to the Study Area**

### **Improvement Implementation Plan for the Central Business District, Cranford, New Jersey by Wallace, Roberts, & Todd – 1985**

The Township of Cranford commissioned Wallace, Roberts, & Todd to write an Improvement Implementation Plan for the Central Business District ("WRT Report"). Figure – is a map from the WRT Report which demonstrates the limits of the Central Business, with the Study Area highlighted. The WRT Report included an accompanying Design Manual for the Central Business District through public participation. The intended purpose of the plan was to enhance the CBD's commercial viability and

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<sup>12</sup> The year 2006 is an approximation. Due to lost records in the Municipal Building from Hurricane Irene, the documents related to the grant could not be located.

attractiveness and encourage new commercial and residential development. Some of the key elements of the Long-Range Development Concept of this plan were the expansion of retail core which is bounded by N Union Avenue, North Avenue, Eastman Street, and Miln Street, the creation of a linear park along the Rahway River in order to enhance visibility and improve access from the CBD, the creation of an improved pedestrian environment as a result of streetscape improvements along central streets, and the development of two or three major public plazas. In the same plan, the area surrounding the train station and an area encompassing this Study Area had been identified as the phase 1 projects to kick start the development. It was also determined that North Avenue provides the major “spine” which traverses Cranford’s CBD and connects all of the distinct areas that comprise the CBD. Therefore, by concentrating initial improvements along this corridor, each area of the CBD will benefit. From market analysis, it was also recommended that Cranford should strive to expand its retail base and should particularly encourage food, apparel, eating and drinking, and miscellaneous retail establishments.

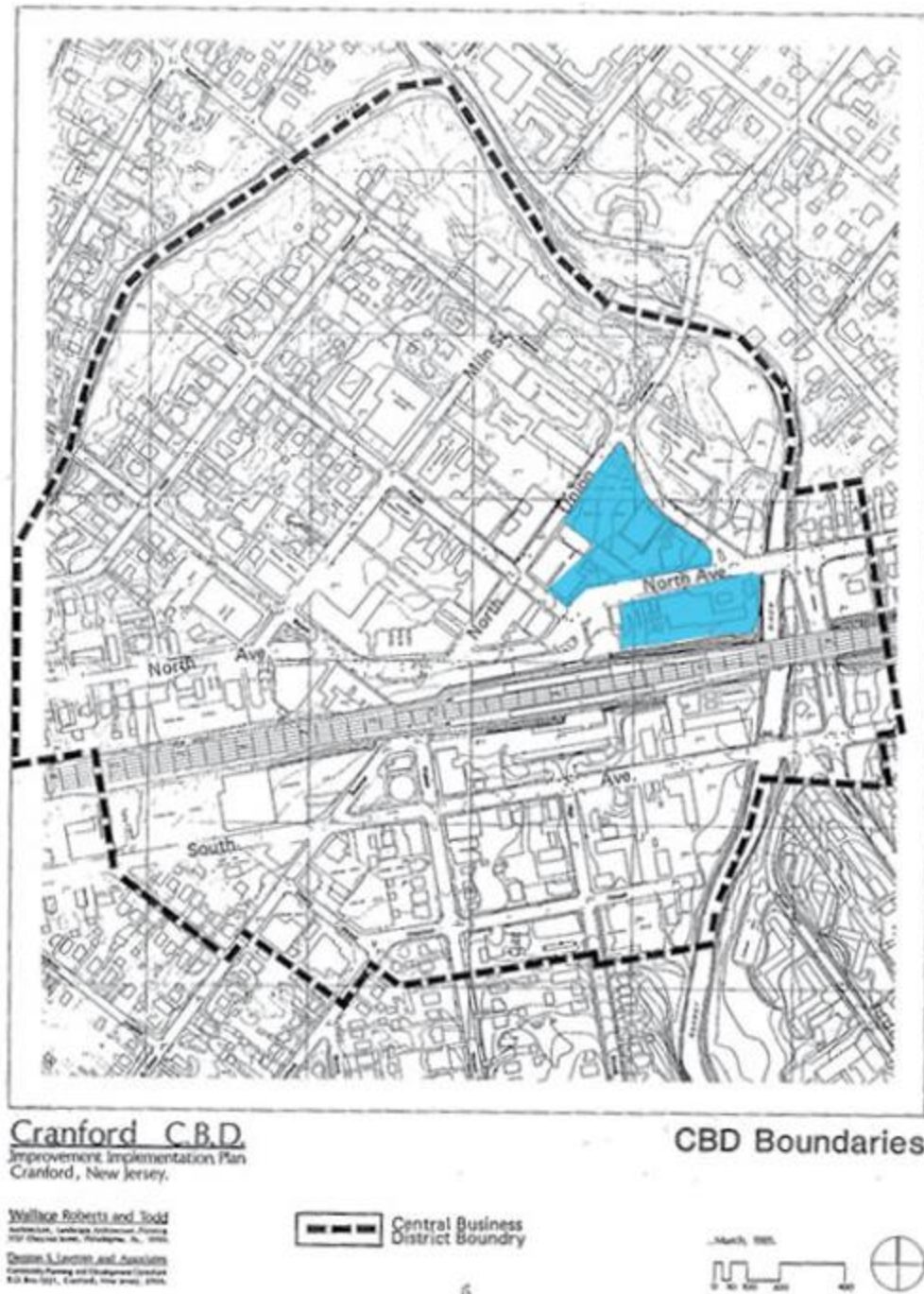


Figure 30: Map of Central Business District Boundaries from WRT Report, Study Area Highlighted

The Wallace, Roberts, & Todd Report addressed 4 priority issues and general recommendations consisting of: The Public-Private Partnership, Economic Development, Parking Analysis, and a Traffic Analysis.

It was recommended that in order to maximize the number of spaces available to the public, a consolidation of public and private holdings and the eventual construction of a municipal parking structure were to be explored. It was also noted that the Railroad Station site could not be developed

to its appropriate scale without structured parking. The Plan also recommended a parking structure along the North Avenue East corridor to address the parking shortage in the future. It was noted that the existing inconsistent number of lanes on North Avenue between N Union Avenue and Alden Street creates a hazardous circulation pattern.

As stated in the SID history section of this report, the Township invested \$3.5 million dollars following its designation as a SID, and after the completion of the WRT report, in streetscape and façade improvements, as well as hosting events, which was consistent with some of the recommendations of this report. However, there were no major developments that were recommended in this report.

### **Downtown Cranford Vision Plan 2000**

The next phase in the Township's pursuit of downtown revitalization was the preparation of the "Downtown Cranford Vision Plan" in 2000, prepared by project consultants A. Nelessen Associates and Arnold Associates. The focus of the Vision Plan was the entirety of Cranford's downtown, including the properties which make up the Study Area of this report. The Vision Plan was based on community opinion at the time as to the types of, and locations for, growth and development in the downtown, including re-zoning, parking, and public spaces. The Plan incorporated the concerns of the community as gathered through meetings with various stakeholders throughout the planning process. In addition to gathering community input, the Vision Plan takes a look at the growth potential within the SID and what steps are needed to prepare for this growth. This Vision Plan too acknowledges the fact that Downtown Cranford faces a parking supply shortage that needs to be addressed.

The four main Recommendations resulting from this report were –

- Target areas for new development – develop specific plans for growth areas in the SID and make these sites the first priority for any development effort. Encouraging new development in areas where underutilized properties are clustered can stabilize the tax base.
- Expansion of parking restrictions along outlying downtown streets to prohibit commuter parking has worsened the existing shortage in commuter parking capacity. In the short-term, this could be alleviated by a jitney program, and an increase in parking meters, but ultimately, building a parking deck will be needed to accommodate and encourage reinvestment in Downtown Cranford. New development in targeted cluster areas would incorporate concealed parking structures in the development.
- Continue public space improvements by rehabilitating the plazas on North Avenue.
- Simplify the number of zones within the SID and clarify the uses within this new district.<sup>13</sup>

### **Parking and Circulation Study 2005**

This study by Vollmer Associates LLP focuses on issues within and recommendations for the Township of Cranford's Special Improvement District (SID), and is comprised of four interrelated elements – Traffic and Vehicular Circulation Study, Jitney Feasibility Study, Parking Study, and Pedestrian Circulation Study.

Upon analysis of current conditions in 2004 and future projections, a future horizon year of 2010 was selected and near-term improvements were proposed. Beyond 2010, traffic and parking conditions were projected and potential issues were identified. Upon analysis, the recommendations included –

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<sup>13</sup> This "new district" would eventually become the Downtown Core Zone District when the Township adopted a new zoning ordinance in 2014.



upgrading all traffic signal equipment along the North Avenue and South Avenue corridors, including within the Study Area, to accommodate signal timing coordination.

The implementation of a jitney service to remove commuter trips from the downtown area, increase the overall number of transit users, and free up parking spaces was explored in collaboration with NJ Transit and potential jitney routes were developed, but have not been implemented. Cranford Township officials have expressed interest in establishing this service as early as 2000.

The Parking Inventory and Analysis carried out in 2004 concluded that Cranford does not have enough parking supply to satisfy demand within the SID, and additional parking is needed to satisfy both long-term and short-term parking needs. The recommendations included – consolidation of the surface parking lots or development of multi-level screened parking garages on-site through redevelopment. This approach would reduce the number of driveways and curb-cuts, which currently lead to traffic accidents and congested roadway conditions; provide additional parking spaces along adjacent streets; and further increase the downtown parking supply by developing a multi-level parking garage structure. The garage would be built with retail space along North Avenue frontage, promoting an active streetscape and economic development opportunities.

The Pedestrian Circulation Study element emphasized the importance of making improvements to pedestrian connections within the downtown to encourage pedestrian activity, which in turn would relieve congestion and reduce environmental impacts. This study element identified North Avenue Station plaza and North Avenue at Springfield Avenue as two of the three areas within the SID in need of pedestrian improvements. These two intersections are the “bookends” of the properties which make up the Study Area of this report.

This study also analyzed traffic accidents in the SID for 2001, 2002, and 2003 and concluded that the intersection of North Avenue and Centennial Avenue, located just north of the Study Area, experienced one of the highest number of accidents in the SID and this rate of collisions was significantly higher than statewide averages. This high rate of collisions could be attributed to the unusual phasing and poor striping at this intersection. The intersection of North Avenue and Springfield Avenue and North Avenue and Alden Street also experience a significant number of collisions.

### **Strategic Planning for Downtown Cranford – May 2017**

Most recently, the DMC spearheaded an effort of Strategic Planning for Downtown Cranford between November 2016 and May 2017. The vision of this plan is to foster an active, self-sustaining, and compact Downtown community of residents and businesses.

Some of the goals and objectives envisioned are –

- Permit 4-story buildings in SID and 2-story buildings at the SID periphery where it adjoins single-family residential properties
- Amend the Land Development Ordinance to prohibit auto-oriented land uses including those with drive-through uses
- Enhance and emphasize gateways to the business district
- Upgrade the landscaping of at least one downtown public space and at municipal properties
- Create a business attraction plan that could be used to actively solicit new downtown businesses

- Pursue development of a downtown hotel that could bring additional visitors and further diversify the tax base
- Amend Land Development Ordinance to require minimum 15' sidewalks for all new development in the SID
- Evaluate trends in parking demand and alternate parking options
- Hire a planning firm with parking experience to conduct a parking study
- Better manage existing parking supply
- Reevaluate pricing strategies for both on-street and permit parking to manage demand
- Replace and augment parking in at least one surface lot with structured parking as part of a more comprehensive development project
- Identify underutilized properties which could be developed or improved
- Update the municipal master plan
- Utilize redevelopment/ rehabilitation designations to encourage development on underutilized properties including vacant parcels and surface parking lots

Some of the policies outlined that were deemed critical to the realization of this vision are –

- Prioritize residential development downtown, while ensuring COAH requirements are met. Downtown residences will help to stabilize tax base while increasing the local customer base for businesses
- Utilize rehabilitation and/or redevelopment designations, particularly at vacant or underutilized properties, to proactively plan for and encourage downtown development
- Decrease or, at the very least maintain the net amount of impervious surfaces in downtown to mitigate flooding concerns
- Ensure that all public spaces downtown – sidewalks, plazas, planters, landscaping etc., are well maintained
- Invest in the physical environment to create a more walkable and accessible downtown for all ages and abilities
- Enhance one's ability to travel to/from downtown on bike
- Manage parking supply to respond to current and future trends

Some of the challenges that were identified include –

- The Township lacks mechanisms to attract funding for planning and/or physical improvements
- Downtown features a number of underutilized properties/parcels, such as one-story buildings, vacant properties, detached buildings, and surface parking
- Certain development patterns and land uses e.g., strip malls, gas stations, auto body shops etc., don't align with Downtown's traditional nature
- Redevelopment/ rehabilitation designations are not used to their full potential
- Increasing the number of downtown businesses without increasing the downtown residential population puts businesses at risk of saturation
- Meeting the new COAH requirements must be navigated by the Township proactively
- Downtown has limited bike parking and no on-street bicycle facilities/ markings
- Street and intersection designs allow and invite speeding
- No alternative means of transportation, such as shuttles, exist connecting key activity generators with Downtown
- Parking supply is fragmented
- Parking wayfinding is extremely limited which can increase the amount of time drivers spend searching for parking
- Parking demand can be difficult to manage during defined peak hours

- The Downtown streetscape is outdated and falling into disrepair
- Many buildings and facades are in disrepair

The goals, objectives, observations, conclusions, and recommendation of this proposal, in 2017, appear to repeat many of those identified in the 1985 Wallace Roberts & Todd report.

## V. Environmental Records

Table 12 describes existing information of environmental records dating back to 1989 for the Study Area. The database primarily used for research of the Study Area is that of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Data Miner, which searches through reports under several categories including 2008 Permit Extension Act, Air Quality Permitting and Reporting, Ambient Water Quality, Certified Laboratories, Community Access, Community Right to Know, Compliance & Enforcement, Exams and Licensing, General Environmental Reports, Hazardous Waste Manifest, Hurricane Sandy, Incidents/Complaints, Mandatory Diesel Retrofit Program, NJPDES Permitting Program, Pending Permit Progress Reports, Permitting Dashboard, Pesticide Control Program, Radon, Site Remediation, Steward Ship, Vehicle Registration Search (2009 forward), Water Supply and Geoscience, Waiver Rule, and X-Ray Compliance. The reports were searched via several different search actions including Enforcement Actions by Site, Enforcement Site Visits, Inspections by Site, Land Use Site Information Map, This Site, Permits by Timeframe, and Violations by Site.

<b>Table 15: Analysis of Environmental Information back to 1989<sup>14</sup></b>				
<b>Block</b>	<b>Lot</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Type</b>
193	12	45 North Ave E	Springfield Ave BP LLC	Cases with No LSRP Retained
195	7.01	44 North Ave E	Macrietta Realty Co Stauber, Alan	Sites with An Immediate Environmental Concern - Vapor Intrusion
195	7.01	44 North Ave E	Macrietta Realty Co Stauber, Alan	Active Sites
195	7.01	44 North Ave E	Macrietta Realty Co Stauber, Alan	Active Sites
195	7.01	44 North Ave E	Macrietta Realty Co Stauber, Alan	Cases Provided Extension of The May 7, 2014 Remedial Investigation - Extended Remedial Investigation Timeframe 5/7/2016
193	6.01	7 Springfield Ave	Township of Cranford	Known and Suspected Contaminated Sites – LSRP Oversight
195	7.01	44 North Ave	Macrietta Realty Co Stauber, Alan	Known and Suspected Contaminated Sites - Known
193	12	45 North Ave E	Springfield Ave BP LLC	Known and Suspected Contaminated Sites – LSRP Oversight
195	1	24 North Ave E	24 North Ave E LLC	Closed Sites with Remediated Contamination
193	6.01	7 Springfield Ave	Township of Cranford	New Case Reported - 1/13/2004
195	7.01	44 North Ave E	Macrietta Realty Co Stauber, Alan	New Case Reported - 6/13/2000
195	7.01	44 North Ave E	Macrietta Realty Co Stauber, Alan	New Case Reported - 12/27/2010

<sup>14</sup>New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, "Data Miner: Advanced Search." Search conducted July 22, 2017 on files back through to 1989. [http://datamine2.state.nj.us/dep/DEP\\_OPRA/adv\\_search.html](http://datamine2.state.nj.us/dep/DEP_OPRA/adv_search.html).

193	12	45 North Ave East	Springfield Ave BP LLC	New Case Reported - 4/1/2003
195	1	24 North Ave E		New Case Reported - 9/11/2014
193	6.01	7 Springfield Ave	Township of Cranford	Active Facilities with Compliant Tanks – Expiration 6/30/2018
193	12	45 North Ave East	Springfield Ave BP LLC	Active Facilities with Compliant Tanks – Expiration 6/30/2018
195	1	24 North Ave E	24 North Ave E LLC	NFA-A (Unrestricted Use) 9/12/2014
193	13	37 To 43 North Ave E	Tuck Sing Continental Inc	NFA (No Further Action) Historic 8/31/1989

**Table 16: Analysis of Environmental Information back to 1989 - Incident Report**

Incident PI Number	Incident Status	Follow- up/Case Status	Incident Date	Incident Description	Incident Source	Source Site Address
	Terminated	UHOT- Pending	9/10/2015	1/1000 GALLON UST REMOVED. CLEAN UP PENDING.	GOODMAN REALITY	23 NORTH AVE UNIT E7
657866	Terminated	UHOT- Central File	7/24/2014	1/550 GALLON UST REMOVED. CLEAN UP PENDING.	24 NORTH AVENUE EAST	24 NORTH AVE E
003546	Continuous	Referred	3/27/2003	4 TANKFIELD WELLS SHOW VAPOR. 1 GROUND WATER RECOVERY WELL SHOWS CONTAMINATION. UST # 0035462	AI UNION GAS LLC	45 NORTH AVE EAST
001944	Continuous	LSRP- Central File	2/19/2003	TEST SAMPLE TAKEN AND FOUND GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION. CLEANUP PENDING	SWAN CUSTOMER	44 NORTH AVE

**Table 16: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
Site Remediation Program  
Active Sites<sup>a</sup> With Confirmed Contamination  
As of 7/22/2017**

Site ID	PI Number	PI Name	Address	Home
45348	000911	CRANFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT	7 SPRINGFIELD AVE	No
1254	003546	SPRINGFIELD AVE BP LLC	45 NORTH AVE E	No

41552	001944	SWAN CUSTOMER CLEANERS	44 NORTH AVE	No
<sup>a</sup> Active Sites are those sites having one or more active cases or remedial action permits where contamination has been confirmed. These sites may have any number of pending and/or closed cases.				

Other sources, listed by Maraziti, Lendor, & Slachetka (2014), that have been consulted for environmental documents and information include the following:

New Jersey Department of Environmental Information: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/>

- Open Public Records Act Request: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/opra/>
- Data Miner: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/opra/online.html>
- Data Miner Electronic Report Finder: [http://www.nj.gov/dep/opra/report\\_finder.html](http://www.nj.gov/dep/opra/report_finder.html)
  - Known Contaminated Site List: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/srp/kcsnj/>
  - Active Site Remediation Cases
  - Compliance and Enforcement
  - Violations
  - Engineering and Institutional Controls: Deed Notices, Classification Exception
  - Areas
  - Landfills
  - Active UST Remediation Cases

United States Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/>

- Superfund / RCRA Sites: [http://www.epa.gov/region02/cleanup/sites/njtoc\\_name.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region02/cleanup/sites/njtoc_name.htm)

## VI. Flood Damage Review

### History of Flooding

The meandering Rahway River is a significant contributor to the identity of Cranford. The 82-square-mile Rahway River Basin runs through 24 municipalities in Union, Essex and Middlesex counties.

The majority of the flood zones in Township of Cranford are concentrated around Rahway River. Most of the flooding around Rahway River occurs in its northern reach, with the low-lying terrain and very wide 100-year and 500-year floodplains. In the middle reach, Rahway is joined by two tributaries: Gallows Hill Road Branch and Garwood Brook, whose confluences also widen the Rahway floodplain and cause additional flooding. Garwood Brook carries the floodwater eastwardly from the Garwood Township, but also causes substantial flooding in Cranford jurisdiction, due to a conveyance constriction under the Conrail Railroad tracks. In its lower reach, Rahway River's floodplain is not as wide, but the additional flooding comes to individual properties as a result of drainage problems along smaller, unnamed streams and drainage channels.

Over the years, the Rahway River experienced major flooding numerous times - in 1938, 1968, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1992, 1999 (Hurricane Floyd), 2007, and 2011 (Hurricane Irene).<sup>15</sup> The number of flood

<sup>15</sup> Russell, S. (Feb 6, 2015). “\$1 million allocated for study to mitigate Rahway River flooding” in myCentralJersey.com. Retrieved from <http://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/union-county/2015/02/06/million-allocated-study-mitigate-rahway-river-flooding/23002057/> on October 4, 2017.



insurance claims from 1978 up to July 31, 2017, 1,316<sup>16</sup> and the average amount of the claims (\$31,001)<sup>17</sup> in Cranford suggests a very high level of vulnerability to floods in this community, in terms of both the numbers of claims versus the overall number of parcels (8,305)<sup>18</sup> and the presumed severity of flooding based on the claims amounts.

Compared to most other jurisdictions in Union County, Cranford has few flooding sources, but relatively large area of floodplain. Although it is difficult to deduce potential severity accurately, it is safe to assume that the extent of flooding in Cranford is relatively high; in more severe events such as tropical cyclones and nor'easters some areas along the upper reach of Rahway River and along the Township boundary with Garwood can expect to have more severe flooding<sup>19</sup>.

<b>Table 18-: Flood Loss Statistics for Union County</b>		
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Total Losses Reported</b>	<b>Total Payments</b>
Township of Berkeley Heights	86	\$386,026.41
Township of Clark	94	\$907,280.76
Township of Cranford	1,316	\$40,547,520.02
Township of Elizabeth	304	\$40,801,327.73
City of Fanwood	11	\$23,966.03
Borough of Garwood	37	\$423,319.89
Borough of Hillside	208	\$1,094,132.39
Township of Kenilworth	151	\$1,676,773.00
Borough of Linden	259	\$5,478,983.67
City of Mountainside	23	\$156,498,983.67
Borough of New Providence	85	\$348,356.00
Borough of Plainfield	784	\$3,921,005.91
City of Rahway	809	\$18,056,115.14
City of Roselle Park	69	\$258,050.05
Borough of Roselle	408	\$7,306,722.24
Borough of Scotch Plains	224	\$1,189,148.60
Township of Springfield	325	\$5,558,787.47
Township of Summit	84	\$428,433.02
Township of Westfield	379	\$4,981,192.67
<b>Total Union County</b>	<b>5,656</b>	<b>\$289,886,124.67</b>
<b>Total New Jersey</b>	<b>159,539</b>	<b>\$5,982,945,094.63</b>

Table 18 demonstrates that Cranford has had significantly more losses than the rest of Union County. Cranford is one of 22 municipalities in Union County, but it contributed to 23% of the flood losses in the county.

<sup>16</sup> FEMA NFIP New Jersey Loss Statistics as of 7/31/2017. Retrieved from <https://bsa.nfipstat.fema.gov/reports/reports.html> on September 29, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Union County, New Jersey: 2015 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update: Appendix 3: Township of Cranford

<sup>18</sup> Union County, New Jersey: 2015 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update: Appendix 3: Township of Cranford

<sup>19</sup> Union County, New Jersey: 2015 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update: Appendix 3: Township of Cranford

During hurricane Irene in August 2011, the Rahway broke through dikes and overflowed earthen dams to flood residential neighborhoods and downtown streets. Nearly 1,300 residences — or more than 15 percent of the Township's houses — experienced significant flood damage. In Cranford, the 2011 storm left cars more than halfway under water on residential streets, filled basements and brought multiple feet of flooding into first floors. Of those, nearly 200 houses had water up to the first floor. Seven had been condemned in the first few days. More than 6,000 residents lost power. The municipal complex and police station were under water. More than 2,000 people evacuated Cranford before the storm. The PSE&G substation, located on South Avenue adjacent to the Rahway River, was under water and electricity could not be restored immediately.

The Municipal Building experienced significant flooding and as a result it was difficult to gather evidence for this report, since many of the Township's records were lost due to water damage. Interviews with municipal employees stated that departments who had Level 1 offices had to work out of trailers following the storm while the Township made needed repairs.

Through correspondence with the Downtown Management Corporation, Harbor Consultants, Inc. was able to acquire a list of businesses in the Special Improvement District who sustained damage during Hurricane Irene. Properties like the Municipal Building which are technically within the limits of the SID were not identified because the list was of businesses who reported damage only. Figure – is a map which demonstrates the businesses within and surrounding the Study Area which were impacted. It should be noted that many of the businesses which were negatively impacted by Hurricane Irene are beyond the boundary of the 500 Year Floodplain.

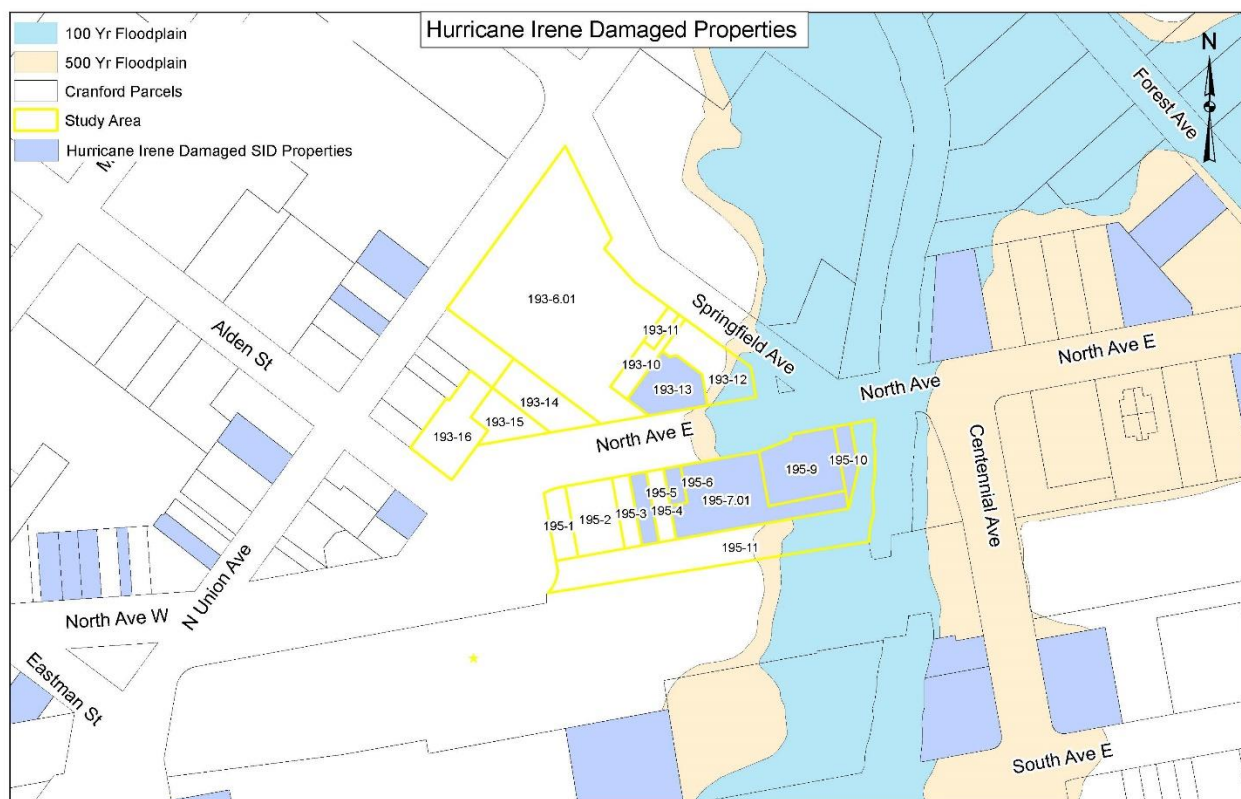


Figure 31: Map of businesses included in the SID who reported damage from Hurricane Irene



*Figure 32: Image from Cranford 35 report showing flooding during Hurricane Irene*

Figure 32 was taken from a Cranford TV 35 report that showed different areas of Cranford after Hurricane Irene. The photograph demonstrates how Riverside Inn on Block 195-10 and Carmen Honda on 195-9 experienced significant flooding.

## **VII. Criteria for Redevelopment Area Determination**

The following section includes the Criteria for Redevelopment Area Determination as stated by the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law as well as property analyses of the properties which are the subject of this Preliminary Investigation report

### **Criteria for Redevelopment Area Determination**

A delineated study area may be determined to be in need of redevelopment if, after investigation, notice and hearing as provided in Section 6 of P.L. 1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-6), the governing body of the municipality by resolution concludes that within the delineated area any of the following conditions is found:

- a. "The generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions.
- b. The discontinuance of the use of buildings previously used for commercial, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such buildings; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenable.

- c. Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or redevelopment entity, or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access to developed sections or portions of the municipality, or topography, or nature of the soil, is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital.
- d. Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community.
- e. A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other similar conditions, which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare, which condition is presumed to be having a negative social or economic impact or otherwise bring detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the surrounding area or the community in general.
- f. Areas, in excess of five contiguous acres, whereon buildings or improvements have been destroyed, consumed by fire, demolished or altered by the action of storm, fire, cyclone, tornado, earthquake or other casualty in such a way that the aggregate assessed value of the area has been materially depreciated.
- g. In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the “New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zones Act,” P.L.1983, c.303 (C.52:27H-60 et seq.) the execution of the actions prescribed in that act for the adoption by the municipality and approval by the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient for the determination that the area is in need of redevelopment pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-6) for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.431 (C.40A:20-1 et seq.) or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.441 (C.40A:21-1 et seq.). The municipality shall not utilize any other redevelopment powers within the urban enterprise zone unless the municipal governing body and planning board have also taken the actions and fulfilled the requirements prescribed in P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40:12A-1 et al.) for determining that the area is in need of redevelopment or an area in need of rehabilitation and the municipal governing body has adopted a redevelopment plan ordinance including the area of the enterprise zone.
- h. The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation.”<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the above conditions, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law defines “Redevelopment area” or “area in need of redevelopment” to mean “an area determined to be in need of redevelopment pursuant to section 5 and 6 of P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-6) or determined heretofore to be a blighted area pursuant to P.L. 1949, c.187 (C.40:55-21.1 et seq.) repealed by this act, both determinations as made pursuant to the authority of Article VIII, Section III, paragraph 1 of the Constitution. A redevelopment area may include land, buildings or improvements, which of themselves

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<sup>20</sup> Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A.40A:12A-1, *et seq.*, as amended

*are not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, but the inclusion of which is found necessary, with or without change in their condition, for the effective redevelopment of the area in which they are part.”<sup>21</sup>*

## **VIII. Evaluation of Study Area**

This Preliminary Investigation Report of the North Avenue Redevelopment Study Area finds that all eighteen (18) properties satisfy the statutory criteria for declaring these lands as being “An Area in Need of Redevelopment” in accordance with the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

Field investigations on a lot by lot basis were performed from July 14, 2017 through December 1, 2017 in order to identify the existing physical conditions of the properties. In addition to field investigations, the study area was evaluated using aerial imagery and was mapped on FEMA Maps, State Development and Redevelopment Maps, Township Tax Maps, and Township Zone Maps. The Planners met with Township of Cranford staff to review and categorize the zoning records, complaints, police records, fire records, and construction and building records for each property in the Study Area. Further, “Community redevelopment is a modern facet of municipal government. Soundly planned redevelopment can make the difference between continued stagnation and decline and a resurgence of healthy growth. It provides the means of removing the decadent effect of slums and blight on neighboring property values, of opening up new areas for residence and industry. In recent years, recognition has grown that governing bodies must either plan for the development or redevelopment of urban areas or permit them to become more congested, deteriorated, obsolescent, unhealthy, stagnant, inefficient and costly.”<sup>22</sup>

It is acknowledged and understood by the authors of this report that within the Study Area there are properties identified as satisfying the criteria for an Area in Need of Redevelopment that may not rise to the level of the adjacent properties in the Study Area and may not exhibit the same level of unhealthy characteristics as some of the contiguous properties. However, this investigation has evaluated the location, size, and development potential of each of the sites individually and finds that due to the overall design and orientation of the properties, it is in the best interest of the Township that each property within the Study Area be designated as an “Area in Need of Redevelopment” in order to accomplish comprehensive and effective redevelopment.

The eighteen (18) properties have been divided by the Blocks in which they are located for evaluation: Blocks 192 and 193.

### **A. Block 193**

A planning analysis of the eight (8) parcels in Block 193 consisting of Lots 6.01, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 concludes that the Study Area satisfies the following five (5) criteria of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law” Criteria (b), (c), (d), (e), (h), and Section 3.

Our findings of this preliminary investigation report are based on the evidence provided throughout this report, including the exhibits, appendices, mapping, photographs, and field visits are summarized in the following Table:

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<sup>21</sup> Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A.40A:12A-1, et seq., as amended

<sup>22</sup> Gallenthin Realty v. Borough of Paulsboro (A-51-2006).



	<b>Table 19: Summary of Redevelopment Criteria Met in Block 193</b>						
Block & Lot	<u>Redevelopment Criteria</u>						
	<u>a</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>c</u>	<u>d</u>	<u>e</u>	<u>h</u>	<u>Section 3</u>
193-6.01			X	X		X	
193-10				X		X	
193-11						X	X
193-12				X		X	X
193-13				X		X	
193-14		X				X	
193-15				X		X	
193-16						X	X

#### Criterion “b”

As described above, Criterion “b” relates to the discontinuance of use, abandonment, or disrepair buildings formerly used for commercial purposes. When a structure meets these standards, then Criterion “b” is applicable. One (1) parcel in Block 193 of the Study Area falls under this Criterion, Block 193, Lot 14 which is located on North Avenue East between Alden Street and Springfield Avenue. The structure on Lot 14 is currently a boarded-up, vacant, abandoned structure which was formerly a commercial establishment. As stated earlier in this report, construction records indicate that the roof had collapsed and the building was deemed to be unsanitary and pose a threat to the safety of the community. Because the building which was formerly a commercial use has continued to remain vacant, boarded-up, and continue to deteriorate this parcel meets Criterion “b.”

#### Criterion “c”

Criterion “c” states that if “land that is owned by the municipality, the county...or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness...is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital, then the parcel is found to meet this criterion. One (1) parcel in Block 193 of the Study Area falls under this Criterion, Lot 6.01. The Lot is a surface parking lot which is listed as an “Active Site with Confirmed Contamination” and is listed on the NJDEP Site Remediation Program and it is a municipal owned property. This contamination limits or hinders the development potential of this lot.

#### Criterion “d”

Criterion “d” states that if areas with buildings or improvements, which by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design...excessive land coverage...or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community, then the parcel is found to meet this criterion. Five (5) parcels located within Block 193 fall under this Criterion: Lots 6.01, 10, 12, 13, and 15.



*Figure 34: Photograph, view of the Municipal parking lot as seen from the sidewalk along North Ave E – surface with noticeable cracks and potholes*



*Figure 33: Photograph, view of the Fire Department building from the parking lot adjoining it, diesel fuel station for filling trucks, within the parking lot can also be seen*

As described in Criterion “c” Lot 6.01 is predominantly a surface parking lot which is listed as an “Active Site with Confirmed Contamination.” In addition to these characteristics, the surface parking lot itself is arranged and designed in a faulty and obsolete manner with excessive coverage which is detrimental to the safety of the community. As Lot 6.01 exists today, the lot is entirely comprised of impervious coverage with the exception of the northern corner which contains a gazebo area with landscaping. In addition to exhibiting excessive land coverage, is not very well maintained and is cracked, uneven, and has potholes at the entrances onto North Avenue East and Springfield Avenue. As stated in the Lot description, the fueling station adjacent to the Cranford Fire Department which is within the driveway leading out onto North Avenue East contributes to Lot 6.01 exhibiting a faulty layout because it interferes with physical circulation and the sight lines required to safely navigate the aisle leading to the ingress/egress on North Avenue East. Further, as the previous sections in this report have highlighted, the use of a surface

parking lot in a downtown, particularly because it is located within a SID, and a Transit Village with close proximity to the train station is highly inefficient and an inappropriate land use in a downtown which does not meet the demands of Cranford. In its current state the surface parking lot has not been able to satisfy the parking needs of Cranford or contribute to the necessary density required for a downtown to thrive. Therefore, because of its faulty and obsolete layout partnered with the inherent inefficiency of a surface parking lot in a Downtown, Lot 14 satisfies Criterion “d.”

Lots 10 and 13 are owned and utilized by the same entity, and it is solely because of that dual ownership that the properties have been able to remain in use. The configuration of the lots permits the businesses on Lot 13 to utilize Lot 10 for parking, deliveries, and waste removal. In order to park during their visit to the businesses located within Lot 13, customers enter Lot 13 via North Avenue East, then travel through Lot 13 to park in the surface parking lot on Lot 10. Customers should then exit the parking area by traveling through the remainder of Lot 10, onto Springfield Avenue, although the intended circulation pattern is unclear within the lot. The current use as a parking area for the businesses on Lot 13 do not meet the striping or other circulation and site improvement standards. Additionally, the size and layout of Lot 10 make it unlikely to ever be developed because of limited access and the constraints caused by the proximity of structures on the neighboring lots. If the structures, uses or ownership of the surrounding lots 6.01, 11, 12, and 13 were to change, especially if Lots 10 and 13 were to be owned by different entities, Lot 10 would be almost inaccessible and not

productively useful due to its size, shape, and point of access. Therefore, due to their faulty arrangement, obsolete layout, excessive land coverage, and underutilization, Lots 10 and 11 satisfy criterion “d.”

Lot 12 currently houses a retail space and a garage in addition to the pumps for the gas station that are both underutilized. The garage is vacant and unused while the retail space is being used as an office and rest spot informally by the gas station attendant. The entire parcel is impervious and is clearly underutilized given that approximately a third of the property is not serving any commercial or residential function even though it is located within the Downtown Core of Cranford. To have approximately one third of a parcel which is located well within approximately 1,000 feet of a New Jersey Transit station not serving any commercial, residential, or community space function is a gross underutilization of land in a downtown. Gasoline service stations are not a permitted use in the Downtown Core district of Cranford. This parcel is a pre-existing non-conforming use so it has been able to remain in operation, however, this continued nonconforming use obstructs the vision and goals the Township has exhibited through their continued revitalization efforts, including the careful selection of uses which would contribute to a vibrant and walkable downtown.

Further, as stated earlier in this report, the Lot is an Active site with Confirmed Contamination and is listed on the NJDEP Site Remediation Program. This documented contamination, limits the development potential of this parcel in the Downtown. Due to this limited development potential, functional obsolescence, excessive land coverage, and deleterious land use, the property qualifies for an area in need of redevelopment designation under criterion “d.”

The shape of Lot 15 and its relationship to the Right-of-Way North Avenue East and other boundaries have led to the construction of a building which can be observed through aerial photos as triangular in shape. Currently the front of the lot is being utilized for parking. This parking area appears difficult to get cars in and out of parking spaces and could lead to prolonged periods of time where cars are on the sidewalk because they have to back out slowly onto North Avenue E. The layout of the building appears to be awkward, obsolete, and inefficient, particularly when partnered with the parking in the front portion of the lot. This layout could lead to unsafe conditions for drivers entering and leaving the lot, pedestrians, as well as drivers on North Avenue East approaching the property.

The presence of surface parking between the front of the building and front property line is inconsistent and inappropriate in a downtown such as Cranford's. The surface parking lot is disruptive and breaks up the street wall creating a negative experience, which the Township of Cranford has demonstrated it wants to enhance based on the improvements such as benches, Victorian streetlamps, brick paver sidewalks, etc. throughout the SID.

On account of these safety concerns raised from a faulty arrangement and obsolete layout, Lot 15 meets criterion “d.”

#### Criterion “h”

Criterion “h” states that the designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation. All eight (8) parcels within Block 193 of the Study Area meet this Criterion, as all parcels are located and mapped within the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1) as depicted on the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), depicted in Exhibit ---. As stated in the SDRP, “in the Metropolitan Planning Area, the State Plan’s intention is to provide for much of the state’s future redevelopment; revitalize cities and towns; promote growth in compact forms; stabilize older communities; redesign areas of sprawl; protect the

character of existing stable communities.”<sup>23</sup> Therefore, Block 193, Lots 6.01, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 satisfy Criterion “h.”

### Section 3

Additionally, pursuant to Section 3, a redevelopment area may include land, buildings or improvements, which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, but the inclusion of which is found necessary, with or without change in their condition, for the effective redevelopment of the area in which they are part. While Block 193, Lots 11 and 16 have not satisfied any Criteria other than “h,” its inclusion in this Redevelopment Study Area is crucial because of its proximity to other qualifying properties and it would create a more effective redevelopment area. Lot 11 is very small and it surrounded by other parcels which meet the criteria to be designated as an “Area in Need of Redevelopment.” Therefore, its exclusion from the designation would significantly hinder and comprehensive redevelopment of the properties which qualify in Block 193. Further, while Lot 12 was also found to meet criterion “d,” Lot 12 should also be included under Section 3 due to its location as both a gateway point from the train station as well as visitors traveling west on North Avenue East. Both lots 12 and 16 are prominent corner lots which act as a gateway to the downtown because the entire frontage of Block 193 on North Avenue East, is visible from the intersection of Alden Street and North Avenue East where visitors and residents enter the downtown when exiting north from the train station. Therefore, because of their location and other physical characteristics in relation to the other properties within Block 193, and the downtown at large, Lots 11, 12, and 16 should be included as an “Area in Need of Redevelopment” under Section 3.

#### **B. Block 195**

A planning analysis of the ten (10) parcels in Block 19 consisting of Lots 6.01, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 concludes that the Study Area satisfies the following six (6) criteria of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law” Criteria (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (h), and Section 3.

Our findings of this preliminary investigation report are based on the evidence provided throughout this report, including the exhibits, appendices, mapping, photographs, and field visits are summarized in the following Table:

Table 20: Summary of Redevelopment Criteria met							
Block & Lot	Redevelopment Criteria						
	<u>a</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>c</u>	<u>d</u>	<u>e</u>	<u>h</u>	<u>Section 3</u>
195-1				X	X	X	X
195-2			X		X	X	
195-3				X	X	X	
195-4				X	X	X	
195-5				X	X	X	

<sup>23</sup> State Development and Redevelopment Plan, New Jersey State Planning Commission, adopted March 1, 2001, page 190.

195-6					X	X	X
195-7.01	X	X		X	X	X	
195-9				X	X	X	
195-10				X	X	X	
195-11			X	X	X	X	

### Criterion “a”

Criterion “a” states that if the generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions, then the parcel is found to meet this criterion. One (1) parcel within Block 195 has been found to satisfy this criterion.



*Figure 35: Photograph, rear view of 195-7.01, signs of extreme disrepair and abandonment*



*Figure 36: Photograph, view of 195-7.01, along North Avenue E, signs of extreme disrepair and abandonment*

The structure on Lot 7.01 is in an advanced state of disrepair which poses a threat to the surrounding community as evidenced by visible portions of the building that are missing and deteriorating as stated in the lot description, even at a distance, the corners of the building are crumbling, and through the windows as seen from the Right of Way, there was advanced deterioration on the inside as well. These characteristics indicate that the parcel qualifies for an Area in Need of Redevelopment designation under criterion “a.”

### Criterion “b”

Criterion “b” relates to the discontinuance of use, abandonment, or disrepair buildings formerly used for commercial purposes. When a structure meets these standards, then Criterion “b” is applicable. One (1) parcel in Block 195 of the Study Area falls under this Criterion, Lot 7.01. The building was previously a dry cleaner and therefore a commercial use, but has since been vacant. Due to its



previous commercial occupation and current vacancy, particularly when partnered with the evidenced advanced disrepair, Lot 7.01 meets criterion “b.”

#### Criterion “c”

Criterion “c” states that if “land that is owned by the municipality, the county...or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness...is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital, then the parcel is found to meet this criterion. Two (2) parcels within Block 195 were found to meet this criterion, Lots 2 and 11.

Both Lots 2 and 11 are municipally owned lots which operate as surface parking, Lot 2 is an unofficial parking lot, but Lot 11 is identified as Municipal Lot 3 (North Avenue) and contains 3-hour visitor and permit parking, and as stated earlier in this report, both lots have historically been used for surface parking for a period greater than 10 years. Surface parking lots within a downtown such as Cranford’s are obsolete and it is an underutilization of land. The Township has commissioned several studies which indicate that surface parking does not satisfy the parking needs of Cranford. Due to their size and shape, neither Lot 2 nor Lot 11 would be attractive for private investment on their own because there is very little frontage on any streets, and it is long and narrow. Even as a surface parking lot it is the asphalt in both lots is cracked, uneven, and contain potholes. The lots is not being used to its fullest potential and could be developed to serve the needs of the community better. On account that both lots are municipally owned, underutilized, poorly maintained, have experienced continued vacancy, and have limited development potential on account of their location, size, and irregular shape, the properties satisfy criterion “c.”

#### Criterion “d”

Criterion “d” states that if areas with buildings or improvements, which by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design...excessive land coverage...or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community, then the parcel is found to meet this criterion. Eight (8) parcels located within Block 195 fall under this Criterion: Lots 1, 3, 4, 5, 7.01, 9, 10, and 11.

As stated earlier in this report, this area experienced significant flooding during Hurricane Irene, and many of the properties, particularly Lots 9 and 10 sustained significant damage. Cranford has become particularly vulnerable to flooding as the number of intensive rain events has increased partnered with increased run off from impervious coverage upstream along the Raritan River. Given these change of circumstances it is imperative that structures within the downtown be resistant to flooding.

All of the commercial properties within Block 195, which front of North Avenue East with the exception of Lots 6 and 9 are only accessible from the rear via Lot 11. Lots 1, 3, 4, 5, 7.01 and 10 would be unable to receive deliveries, engage in loading/unloading, and have appropriate waste removal if vehicles were unable to travel through Lot 11. Lots 3, 4, 5, and 10 each have on-site parking located in the rear of the properties but this parking would also be inaccessible if Lot 11 were to ever experience development or become encumbered and inaccessible. In order for these businesses to be viable they are dependent on the existence of the surface parking lot located on Lot 11. Lot 4 further has detached structures located in the rear of the property appear in a state of advanced disrepair with peeling paint, exposed electric systems, rickety doors which have been covered and are no longer in use, etc. which

renders them obsolete. Therefore, the layout and design of Lots 1, 3, 4, 5, 7.01 and 10 is faulty and obsolete and satisfy criterion “d.”



*Figure 38: Photograph, view of the rear of 195-1 and 195-2, dumpster and barrels are located on municipal property in drive aisle*



*Figure 37: Photograph, rear of Lots 2 and 3, parking is contiguous*



*Figure 40: Photograph, rear view of 195-4, noticeable deteriorating detached structures*



*Figure 39: Photograph, rear of 195-5 which is only accessible via 195-11*



*Figure 41: Photograph, rear view of 195-10*

As stated earlier, the business operating on Lot 9 is a pre-existing nonconforming use since auto repair garages are not a permitted use in the Downtown Core District.. The business on Lot 9 also does not meet several of these criteria required of a auto repair shop operating under a conditional use, if it were permitted. The Lot is under 10,000 square feet and therefore does not meet the lot requirement of 15,000 square feet, its entrance and exit drives are within 10 feet from adjoining property lines on both sides, and most notably, it is located within a special improvement district.

The establishment has no real circulation that is apparent and has cars parked on the entire space. The parcel is clearly underutilized and the provision of a service garage in the Downtown Core of a town appears to be functionally obsolete. Therefore, on account of this faulty arrangement and obsolete layout, Lot 9 meets criterion “d.”

While Lot 11 is not reliant on neighboring parcels in order to operate, a surface parking lot that can accommodate about 30 cars in the Downtown Core of a town does not adequately meet the needs of the current day residents or employees and on account of this functional obsolescence and the poor maintenance of the lot which also poses a threat to the safety, welfare, and health of the community. Further, as stated earlier in this report, the surface parking lots have not been able to satisfy the parking needs of Cranford or contribute to the necessary density required for a downtown to thrive, therefore the parcel satisfies criterion “d.”

#### Criterion “e”

Criterion “e” states that if there is a growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other similar conditions, which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare, which condition is presumed to be having a negative social or economic impact..., then the parcel is found to meet this criterion. Ten (10) parcels within Block 195 meet this criterion, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.01, 9, 10, and 11.

The fact that Lot 11 which is currently developed as a municipal parking lot is configured in such a way that the majority of the privately held properties in Block 195 of this Study Area, are contiguous to the municipal surface parking lots can only access the rear of their buildings and operate the business via access from the municipal parking lot located on Lot 11 creates a physical constraint that, in our opinion, impedes land assemblage and discourages the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare which condition is presumed to be having a negative social and economic impact or otherwise bring detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the surrounding area and the community in general. As evidenced by the inability to access the rear entrances and accompanying parking of these lots, without travelling through Lot 11, and the presence of dumpsters, barrels, and other items on municipal property, there is unclear title indicating where one property ends, and the other begins. Therefore, this property, in our opinion, also satisfies criterion “e.”

#### Criterion “h”

Criterion “h” states that the designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation. All ten (10) parcels within Block 193 of the

Study Area meet this Criterion, as all parcels are located and mapped within the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1) as depicted on the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), depicted in Exhibit --- .As stated in the SDRP, “in the Metropolitan Planning Area, the State Plan’s intention is to provide for much of the state’s future redevelopment; revitalize cities and towns; promote growth in compact forms; stabilize older communities; redesign areas of sprawl; protect the character of existing stable communities.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, Block 195, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.01, 9, 10, and 11 satisfy Criterion “h.”

### Section 3

Additionally, pursuant to Section 3, a redevelopment area may include land, buildings or improvements, which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, but the inclusion of which is found necessary, with or without change in their condition, for the effective redevelopment of the area in which they are part. While Block 195, Lot 6 has not satisfied any Criteria other than “h,” its inclusion in this Redevelopment Study Area is crucial because of its proximity to other qualifying properties and it would create a more effective redevelopment area as an entire block. Further, Lot 1 should also be included under Section 3, because similarly to Lot 16 in Block 193, the location of Block 195, Lot 1, is a part of the “gateway” to the Township when exiting north from the train station. This location is prominent and contributes to the tone of the downtown and therefore, a meaningful and successful redevelopment to this area must include this Lot.

## **IX. Summary & Conclusion**

In summary, this Preliminary Investigation Report concludes that the properties located in the Study Area satisfies the statutory criteria for an area in need of redevelopment in accordance with the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

It is recommended that the Township Planning Board and the Township Committee take those actions as prescribed by law to declare the entire study area to be a condemnation area in need of redevelopment based on criteria (a), (b), (c), (d), and (h) of section 40A:12A-5 of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

In order for Township of Cranford to exercise the powers prescribed within the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, the Township’s next step in the planning process is to adopt a Redevelopment Plan. The LRHL defines a Redevelopment Plan as:

*“A plan adopted by the governing body of a municipality for the redevelopment or rehabilitation of all or any part of a redevelopment area, or an area in need of rehabilitation, which plan shall be 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.”<sup>25</sup>*

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<sup>24</sup> State Development and Redevelopment Plan, New Jersey State Planning Commission, adopted March 1, 2001, page 190.

<sup>25</sup> Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A.40A:12A-1, et seq., as amended

## **X. Exhibits**



## **XI. Appendix**