Township of Harding
Morris County, New Jersey

New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan

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New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan

INTRODUCTION

This Redevelopment Plan has been prepared consistent with the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, NJSA 40A:12A-1 et seq., (the "Redevelopment Law") to establish a redevelopment area and plan for the revitalization of New Vernon Village in the Township of Harding.

The Redevelopment Law is a tool that allows local government to become directly involved with development and redevelopment and to target specific properties for special treatment as part of a redevelopment plan. The intent is to permit local governments to take actions to reverse or correct conditions found to be deleterious to the public welfare because these conditions are unlikely to be corrected or ameliorated solely by private effort. Designating a *redevelopment area* in New Vernon allows the township to implement this plan to ensure that New Vernon village will remain a viable focal point for the entire Harding community. This plan serves as the catalyst for accomplishing this important goal by:

- Identifying sites for a new Post Office and Library.
- Developing plans for public safety improvements, including those needed for fire safety, pedestrian circulation, parking, traffic-calming, and wastewater disposal.
- Maintaining a balance between residential and commercial land uses and encouraging historic preservation through proper land use controls and design guidelines.

New Vernon is a small rural village situated in the heart of Harding Township. Several prominent roads converge in the village, anchoring each end of the village core (the crossroads of Millbrook/Village Road and Lee's Hill/Blue Mill/Village and Glen Alpin roads). Traditionally, the village of New Vernon has served as a focal point for Harding residents. It has long contained a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional (religious and public) uses. The New Vernon Historic District was defined in 1980 and, through the efforts of local residents, was placed on the state and national register of historic places.

Until two years ago, the New Vernon Post Office was situated on Village Road in the heart of the village core, ensuring daily visits from residents who then supported the small-scale village businesses. The Post Office had outgrown its Village Road location and has since been unable to negotiate a new site within the village. Consequently, a temporary postal facility has been established in trailers located in the parking lot behind the Municipal Building on Blue Mill Road.

This redevelopment plan was prompted by community concerns about the potential permanent loss of the Post Office from New Vernon and other changes affecting properties within the village and Historic District. Some properties have fallen into disrepair, and a prominent business has been vacated. Small lot sizes, in combination with modern zoning and wastewater requirements, limit prospects for private redevelopment and new business uses. In addition, the Harding Library Association has outgrown its small quarters in the Municipal Building and needs a new site for a new Library.

DESIGNATED REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The designated New Vernon Redevelopment Area includes 13 lots comprising 10.25 acres situated on the east and west sides of Village Road in the heart of New Vernon Village. All of the lots are improved with structures and other site improvements.

The designated area incorporates all of the B-1 zoning district and, with the exception of a portion of the township-owned lot, all of the designated area is within the state and nationally registered New Vernon Historic District. The maps included at the end of this plan display the designated redevelopment area and the table below displays pertinent data and characteristics concerning each lot.

NEW VERNON REDEVELOPMENT AREA					
(1) BLOCK-LOT OWNER	(2) LOT SIZE acres/sq. ft.	(3) ZONE DISTRICT	(4) EXISTING LAND USE(S)	(5) DATE OF BLDG. CONSTRUCTION	(6) BLDG. SQ. FT.
17-1 Harding Township	4.3 187,743	PL	Tunis-Ellicks House, outbuildings Dept. of Public Works	1795 1980	2,324 11,760
17-57 Waldon	0.19 8,315	B-1	Professional offices	1978	2,668
17-58 Cooke	0.3 13,068	B-1	Residence, 2 sheds	Hist. Records: unknown Tax Records: 1870	1,993
17-60 Dietzeman	0.27 11,761	B-1	Residence, shed	1860s	1,678
17-61.02 Hayes, H.	0.3 12,959	B-1	Residence, shed; truck storage	1935	1,632
17-61 Page & Hayes, J.	0.74 32,234	B-1	Former auto repair business	1916	3,942
17-61.01 Hayes, H.	0.64 27,878	B-1	Residence	1894	1,912
18-3.01 Fennimore	0.43 18,770	B-1	Residence, attached garage	1955	1,722
18-3 Fennimore	0.54 23,448	B-1	Residence, detached garage, shed ("The Academy")	Const: < 1799 (moved to site: 1867-68)	3,264
18-4 Richards	0.22 9,626	B-1	Residence Detached garage w/ apt.	1930	2,045 1,676
18-5 J.P.M. Chase	1.2 52,272	B-1/R-2/R-3	Bank, offices, detached garage	1860s	2,356
18-6 Ward	0.8 34,848	B-1/R-3	Real Estate offices Bank	1820s 1983	1,680 4,000
18-7 Mondello	0.31 13,494	B-1/R-3	Real Estate offices, apartment Store, 2 apartments	1867-1869 1893; 1930s	2,752 2,511

NOTES:
1. Information for this table was obtained from Harding Township tax assessment and New Vernon Historic District records.
2. The shading in column four denotes nonresidential land use(s).
3. The building square footage includes all buildings on the lot, plus open porches and overhangs of greater than four feet, but excludes basements and attic space.
4. The date of building construction for Lot 58 in Block 17 is uncertain. The 1981 Historic District Survey does not mention the building. Similarly, the updated New Vernon Historic District survey (2002 draft) does not attribute any historic significance to the building.

OVERVIEW OF THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

This redevelopment plan is rooted in the goals of returning the Post Office and establishing a viable site for a new library within the village core. If these goals cannot be achieved, there is a concern that the village will continue to decline and no longer function as the community center. The following table provides an overview of the plan's components; a more detailed explanation of each is provided later in this plan.

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN COMPONENT	REDEVELOPMENT PLAN STRATEGY
Post Office	The plan identifies two potential sites for a new Post Office within the redevelopment area: --Block 17 Lot 61 (former "Coach Works" site) --Block 17 Lot 58 (current residential use)
Library	The plan establishes a site for a new library within the redevelopment area: --Block 17 Lot 1 (Township land - Tunis-Ellicks site)
Land uses	--Residential: the plan identifies goals and objectives to maintain a variety of residential uses in the village. --Nonresidential: the plan identifies currently permitted and proposed nonresidential land uses.
Public safety improvements and circulation	The plan identifies the need and location(s) for: --Pedestrian pathways --Village parking --A cistern for fire fighting --Traffic control
Wastewater management	The plan recommends a study of wastewater management solutions that will encourage redevelopment in compliance with current wastewater requirements.
Historic preservation	The plan supports the preservation of historic resources and provides a development incentive to encourage the re-use and restoration of historic structures.
Redevelopment Area design guidelines	The plan establishes general design objectives for the redevelopment area and recommends the development of standards to be applied to the area.

This plan represents a multi-faceted approach to revitalization of the village core. While some components of the plan will be undertaken directly by the township, it is anticipated that other aspects will be undertaken by the private sector with the township acting as a catalyst for redevelopment through the adoption and implementation of this plan. Some components involve the need for additional study with further details to be addressed via a future amendment of this plan and/or implementing ordinances. As evidenced below, the plan has been developed consistent with local planning goals with respect to appropriate land uses, population density, traffic and utilities, and recreational and community facilities and other public improvements.

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS

The Redevelopment Law requires that a redevelopment plan be substantially consistent with or designed to effectuate the township's Master Plan and include sufficient detail to indicate the following:

1. The plan's relationship to definite local planning objectives as to appropriate land uses, population density, improved traffic and public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities and other public improvements.
2. The proposed land uses and building requirements in the redevelopment area.
3. Adequate provision for temporary or permanent relocation, if necessary.
4. An identification of any property that is proposed to be acquired by the township.
5. Any significant relationship of the redevelopment plan to other plans, including the master plans of contiguous municipalities, the County Master Plan, the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.
6. The relationship of the redevelopment plan to current or proposed development regulations applicable to the redevelopment area.

LOCAL PLANNING OBJECTIVES

New Vernon Village has long been the focal point for Harding residents. The village has served as a gathering place for residents despite its limited size and small-scale business uses. This was especially true in the past when the Post Office was located in the heart of the village. Recently, however, township officials and residents alike have expressed concern about the decline of the village due to the loss of the Post Office, the abandonment of a prominent, centrally located business, and the need for renovations to properties within the village core.

Significant private investment in the area has not occurred in the village core for over a decade. This is likely due, at least in part, to the fact that any change of use or expansion of an existing use would trigger the need for septic upgrades or even replacement in order to comply with post 1990 wastewater system design requirements. The small lot development pattern, combined with requirements for on-site parking and other improvements can make a change or expansion of use problematic and also complicate efforts to preserve historic structures. The Township Committee has concluded that there is a need for a community-led revitalization effort to encourage redevelopment/restoration in the village core and its viability as a gathering place and focal point for the community. Following are the specific objectives in designating the redevelopment area and in developing and implementing this redevelopment plan.

- To promote the community welfare by re-establishing and protecting the character of New Vernon Village.
- To encourage the use of, and support for, the village as the focal point for the community.
- To provide infrastructure improvements needed to support the revitalization of the village, including safe pedestrian and vehicular circulation and village parking.

- To promote the preservation of historic structures and encourage redevelopment consistent with the character of the Historic District.
- To reclaim environmentally challenged properties.
- To develop appropriate sites for a new Post Office and Library as sustainable anchors in the village, thereby encouraging the use of the village by residents on a consistent basis.
- To support the economic viability and the quality and availability of community services in the village by: (1) making appropriate public investments, and (2) encouraging private redevelopment to establish small-scale businesses, consistent with the scale and character of the village.
- To consider and develop appropriate wastewater management solutions to support existing and future uses in the village, and to protect potable water sources, consistent with Master Plan goals.
- To support existing residential uses, maintain a balance between residential and nonresidential uses, and encourage additional affordable housing in the village.
- To support existing and encourage new volunteer interests that promote the community welfare, e.g., activities related to the Tunis-Ellicks House, Memorial Park, Library and Firehouse.

Existing Land Uses and Population Density in the Redevelopment Area

There are 12 privately owned lots and one township-owned lot within the designated redevelopment area. Existing land uses incorporate a mix of residential and commercial uses that include eleven residences (seven single-family homes and four apartments), professional offices, real estate agencies, banks and a small grocery store (the "Deli"). In addition, one commercial property is the site of a former gasoline station and motor vehicle repair business (most recently, the New Vernon Coach and Motor Works or "Coach Works" site). The township property contains the Tunis-Ellicks house and the township's Department of Public Works maintenance/storage and recycling facilities. About half of the properties contain buildings constructed prior to 1900 and only two lots (not including the DPW site) contain a principal structure built after World War II.

The businesses in the village are small-scale in nature and are generally intended to serve the local market. Some businesses have been established in structures that were originally designed for and used as residences, while others have an architectural style fully compatible with the village's residential structures and scale. The Coach Works site is an exception, although at this point, the building on that site is in a serious state of disrepair; the facade has been condemned and the building is no longer being used as a business. Despite limited walkways, the village is pedestrian-oriented in terms of building scale and site layout, in part because most of the business activity today occurs on the easterly side of Village Road.

The buildings within the redevelopment area are generally of modest size, although in a number of cases, they exceed the allowable 15% floor area ratio (FAR)[1] limit for the B-1 Zone. The average

[1] "Floor area ratio" (FAR), typically expressed as a percentage of the lot size, is utilized in zoning to limit the maximum amount of total floor area permitted on a lot. It means "the sum of all floors of buildings or structures compared to the total area of the site" (see Municipal Land Use Law definitions - NJSA C.40:55D-4).

FAR in the redevelopment area (not including the township property) is 19.43% based on the first and second floors only. Including basements in the total floor area raises the average FAR to 24.52% for the privately owned lots. In terms of the perceived scale of a building, the floors above ground are the most important. However, if basement areas are used for business purposes, the number of employees (and visitors) on the site and the consequential need for parking may increase.

Lots in the redevelopment area range in size from 8,315 square feet to 187,743 square feet (the township's 4.3 acre lot). Although the average lot size (not including the township land) is 21,556 square feet or almost one-half acre, the lot sizes are very diverse. Current B-1 zoning requirements stipulate a minimum lot size of 9,000 square feet and only two lots approximate this size (8,315 and 9,626 square feet). The density of the residential portion of the village is approximately 3 units per acre,[2] which is typical of many rural villages and hamlets throughout New Jersey. This is significant because there is no public potable water supply or wastewater treatment system serving New Vernon and none is planned.

Returning the Post Office and establishing a library within the village core will complement and indeed contribute to the pedestrian scale and nature of the village, ensuring daily visits from residents utilizing both facilities and coordinating visits to the other businesses in the village, as well as nearby churches and parks.

Traffic and Transportation in the Redevelopment Area

Village Road is the principal road in New Vernon Village. It is a collector road under Morris County jurisdiction. With its location in the center of the township and connections with other collector roadways, it affords excellent accessibility to the redevelopment area from outlying areas of Harding and makes the location of the Post Office and Library especially appropriate. It is anticipated that the implementation of this redevelopment plan will greatly increase the pedestrian-friendly layout and atmosphere of the village. There is no public transportation serving the village.

Because Village Road is located in a historic district and redevelopment area, there are special county land development regulations applicable to the roadway. Specifically, "it is the policy of Morris County that design standards and widths of roadways and rights-of-way in historic districts be continued and maintained in their existing configuration."[3] The current speed limit on Village Road is 30 MPH and there is a concern about safety in view of the pedestrian scale of the village. In combination with the proximity of the Millbrook Road intersection (and its difficult alignment) and the shallow setback of structures to the roadway, it is appropriate to consider methods of "traffic-calming" in the village area. In addition, it is important that new uses established in the village be designed to contribute to pedestrian access and safety.

In terms of traffic generation, it is anticipated that the volume of traffic generated by the Post Office will be approximately the same as when it was previously situated on Village Road near the Deli. However, in developing a new site it will be possible to arrange access and site circulation so as to

[2] The residential density is 2.97 units per acre based on 7 residential lots containing 8 residences, and 3.66 units per acre including the mixed-use lot (Block 18 Lot 7) containing 3 apartments.

[3] Land Development Standards, Morris County, New Jersey; September 23, 1998; section 510D5.

minimize conflicts and substantially improve safety and pedestrian mobility. Clearly, there will be some additional traffic expected in connection with a new Library, although the hours of operation could be expected to avoid peak hour traffic. Achieving the goals of this plan relies heavily on providing pedestrian access to the Post Office, Library and other existing and future uses in the village area, and is essential to maintaining the pedestrian scale and orientation of the village.

Public Utilities in the Redevelopment Area

Almost all of Harding Township, including the entire designated redevelopment area, is included within Planning Area 5 (*Environmentally Sensitive*) by the New Jersey State Planning Commission. Planning Area 5 encompasses much of the state's rural or low density and natural resource areas. Areas within Planning Area 5 are generally not served by public water and sewer infrastructure, except in designated "centers" with a population and/or intensity of development sufficient to support public utility systems.

Although limited parts of Harding near some municipal borders are served by public utilities based in adjacent municipalities, the redevelopment area is not near any existing or planned service areas. All of the lots in the redevelopment area are served by private wells and septic systems. Existing and proposed development will continue to be dependent upon private facilities. In view of the small lot sizes in the village, the viability of individual systems needs to be monitored. In addition, the uses proposed in this plan must be of a type, scale and intensity so as to accommodate private wastewater disposal systems consistent with public planning policy and environmental protection goals.

Recreation, Community Facilities and Other Public Improvements

The redevelopment area actually represents a small portion of the New Vernon Village area. Surrounding land uses include residential neighborhoods, houses of worship, and community facilities, including the New Vernon Firehouse, the municipal building (Kirby Hall) and parks and recreational facilities. Memorial Park is the closest park site, situated at the intersection of Village and Millbrook roads opposite the Deli. Two houses of worship, Bayne Park, and the municipal building are not far from the redevelopment area, and if there were pedestrian access from the village core, they would be considered within easy walking distance of the redevelopment area.

PROPOSED LAND USES AND BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

This plan proposes new uses within the redevelopment area, introduces plans for public safety improvements, and recommends actions to maintain a balance of residential uses and to preserve historic resources. This section deals with the specific plan components, outlining the intent of each, planned strategies and recommendations for future actions, as warranted.

For over 18 months, township officials have worked with subcommittees and task forces on the feasibility of re-establishing the Post Office and constructing a new Library in or near the village. Studies include preliminary assessments of site conditions and conceptual site layouts and renderings. The purpose of these preliminary investigations was simply to assess the general feasibility of establishing these facilities on sites in or near the village core. From this work it is clear that there are potential sites within the redevelopment area that could accommodate the needs of the Postal Service and the Harding Library Association. However, detailed site plans will need to be prepared as part of the implementation of this plan.

To be consistent with the goals of this redevelopment plan, new uses developed within the designated redevelopment area must be compatible with the scale, historic character, and residential nature of the village. Of prime importance is the need for new uses to be "pedestrian friendly" to reinforce the pedestrian orientation of the business-zoned area, thereby restoring the village core to its original role as a gathering place and focal point for the township. The re-establishment of the Post Office and the siting of a new Library within the redevelopment area will be compatible with these goals. They will be "anchors" within the village core and will lead to the overall revitalization of the village. Other uses established in the redevelopment area must also be neighborhood oriented, pedestrian friendly, and of a scale and intensity that will be compatible with existing residences and historic structures.

The New Vernon Post Office

The United States Postal Service is in need of approximately 2,000 square feet of first floor space plus sufficient land area to accommodate circulation for parking and loading. Although the specific number of parking spaces needed has not been identified, the parking demand at the temporary postal facility at the municipal building provides some guidance. During a typical weekday, the number of cars at the site ranges from a just a few to about ten vehicles at any one time. A Police Department survey conducted on a Saturday morning in February 2003 indicated that the number of vehicles parked at the postal facility ranged from six to 14 vehicles, plus two employee vehicles.[4] The specific number of off-street parking spaces can be definitively planned when detailed site plans are prepared for a new postal facility. The number of spaces may, to some extent, depend upon the site selected, and whether there is a realistic possibility of joint use with the village parking area described later.

There are no undeveloped sites in the redevelopment area and all but one business site is presently occupied. In view of this, there are two properties under consideration for a new Post Office: the Coach Works property, which was vacated in early 2002 and a second site, currently used for residential purposes, which is in the process of being sold and will be available for redevelopment. These sites are highlighted on a map included at the end of this plan. Either of these sites could accommodate a postal facility of the size and scope needed by the Postal Service. Whatever site is developed for the Post Office should be arranged to allow for pedestrian access to other village businesses, and provide vehicular access, parking, and site circulation (including access for Postal

[4] The Police Department conducted a vehicle count on Saturday, February 8, 2003. At 10:00 AM there were 7 vehicles, at 10:30 AM there were 6 vehicles, and at 11:00 AM there were 14 vehicles parked at the temporary postal facility behind the municipal building.

Service trucks and contractors) that will ensure pedestrian safety and minimize impacts on adjacent residences.

Block 17 Lot 61 (Coach Works Property): This site (also known as "Ortman's Garage") is centrally located in the redevelopment area, on the westerly side of Village Road opposite Chase Bank and Ward Real Estate. It contains approximately 32,234 square feet (0.74 acres) and as such, it is the third largest site in the designated area. It has approximately 140 feet of frontage on Village Road. Both the frontage and lot size substantially exceed minimum B-1 zoning requirements. The existing building on the site has been condemned and will likely need to be demolished to redevelop the site. In addition, it is likely that some site cleanup may be necessary due to the prior uses of the property. The necessity and extent of any cleanup can be assessed by conducting an environmental analysis of the property.

The Coach Works site is afforded access from Village Road. Its central location and proximity opposite other village businesses makes pedestrian access and linkage with other uses a realistic possibility. In addition, it is adjacent to the township property, which affords an opportunity to provide pedestrian access to the Tunis-Ellicks House and Library (see below). Adjacent land uses to the north and south of the property are single-family residences. Therefore, accommodation for landscaping and screening will be important in developing this site for a new nonresidential use.

Under the current B-1 Zone FAR limitations, a total of 4,835 square feet in floor area would be permitted on the site. Therefore, it is possible to develop a structure or structures with multiple uses, to include a Post Office on the ground floor.

Block 17 Lot 58 (Cooke Property): This site is a 13,068 square foot lot (0.3 acres) located on the westerly side of Village Road. It contains a single-family dwelling that is in the process of being sold. It has approximately 142 feet of frontage and derives access from Village Road. Surrounding land uses include a small professional office building to the north, a single-family residence to the south, and the township's DPW facility to the west (rear) of the site. Although the site is less than average in size compared to others in the redevelopment area, it is almost one and one-half times the minimum lot size required in the B-1 Zone.

Existing structures on the site include a dwelling and two sheds. The dwelling appears to be a combination of two structures conjoined and perhaps moved to the site from another location. None of the structures on the property appear on the 1981 Historic District Survey and they do not appear to have historic or architectural significance according to a recent update of the district survey. The owner of this property plans to relocate out of the area.

Although quite small, this site is adequate for a building of sufficient size for the Post Office (a total of 1,960 square feet would be permitted under current B-1 zoning limitations), but it would be necessary to utilize a portion of the adjacent township land to accommodate some of the needed parking and possibly the wastewater disposal area, depending upon site layout. In the development of a site plan for this property, landscaping would also be important to provide a buffer for the adjacent residence. In addition to its small size, this site is not as centrally located as the Coach Works property, making it more difficult to achieve pedestrian linkage with other village businesses and overall, a less desirable option for the development of the Post Office.

The Library at Tunis-Ellicks Farm

The Harding Library Association is a local nonprofit organization. Currently, the Association operates a small Library within the municipal building. That space is, however, inadequate for the Library's current and increasing needs to meet the demand for it services. The Association anticipates being able to raise sufficient private funding for the construction and ongoing maintenance and operations of a new Library consisting of approximately 5,000 square feet if a site can be made available by the township.

The development of a new Library within the redevelopment area is fully consistent with the objectives of this plan and it would have a positive impact on the whole village and surrounding area. Establishing the Library in the village core would provide another "anchor" (in addition to the Post Office) and "draw" for residents to visit the village. In view of high land costs and the space requirements of the proposed Library, this plan proposes that the Library be established on the township land as part of the Tunis-Ellicks historic area. By leasing a portion of the township land to the Association, out-of-pocket expenses for land acquisition can be avoided, and the lease agreement can provide for the Harding Library Association to assume all costs of construction and ongoing maintenance and operations of the new Library.

The township lot (Block 17 Lot 1) consists of approximately 4.3 acres with frontage on Village and Millbrook roads. It lies west of and, for the most part, behind the lots that are on the westerly side of Village Road. The lot contains two developed areas: the restored historic Tunis-Ellicks House and outbuildings situated close to the intersection of Village and Millbrook roads and the DPW/recycling facilities, which lie at the opposite end of the property to the north. Currently, the combined building area of all structures on the site equals approximately 7.5%. The lot is very irregularly shaped, somewhat like an hourglass, which provides the opportunity to consider the two development areas (Tunis-Ellicks and DPW) as somewhat separate entities.

Preliminary studies of potential site layouts indicate that there is sufficient area on the township property, behind the Tunis-Ellicks House, to construct a building with a "footprint" of approximately 2,500 square feet with two stories, totaling 5,000 square feet in floor area (see the map at the end of this plan). The building could be designed to resemble a barn, which would be fully compatible with the historic character of the site. Moreover, setting the building behind the historic house would greatly diminish its perceived scale from Village and Millbrook roads, avoiding any marked change in the streetscape. A parking area could also be set back away from adjacent roads, avoiding the negative impacts that a large parking area would have on the streetscape and pedestrian orientation of the village. Pedestrian pathways could be developed to provide linkage between the Library and other village businesses, and the Post Office.

Existing and Future Land Uses

Residential Land Uses: One of the most important aspects of any village is its residential component or neighborhood. An important goal of this plan is the protection and continuation of residential uses in the village core so as to maintain a balance between residential and nonresidential uses. As noted, seven of the thirteen lots in the redevelopment area are presently used for residential purposes. There are also four rental apartments in the village, which have been in existence for

many years; current zoning does not permit new apartments in the B-1 Zone. These residential uses should be supported and protected so that their use is continued and additional residential uses should be encouraged.

It should be noted that three of the lots within the redevelopment area are split-zoned, with a portion of their land area included in either or both the R-2 and R-3 residential zones. This plan does not expand the boundaries of the business-zoned portion of the village, nor does it supersede the zoning limitations applicable to split-zoned lots or the residentially zoned portion of any lot. However, the Township Committee may, at a future date, seek to realign the R-2 and R-3 zones so as to lessen the confusing nature of the zone boundaries in this area. The goal of any district realignment should be to lessen the complexity of the zoning and avoid expansion of the B-1 Zone, with the exception that all of Lot 7 in Block 18 should be included in the B-1 Zone. The following policies should be implemented as part of this redevelopment plan.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE POLICIES	
Existing residential dwellings	Existing single-family residential uses should be continued in order to maintain the village's strong residential component. The township should investigate creative methods to support this policy including the possibility of purchasing development rights and considering a realignment of residential zone boundaries. In addition, homeowners should be permitted to board up to 2 persons in their dwelling, as is already permitted in the R-2, R-3 and R-4 zones.
Rental apartments	Apartments should be a permitted use on any lot in the B-1 Zone and included as a second floor use in connection with the establishment of new businesses in the redevelopment area. This mixed-use development pattern (second floor apartments above a first floor commercial use) is consistent with existing conditions and should be perpetuated and supported.
Affordable housing	The township will encourage affordable and/or low cost housing in the redevelopment area, including shared housing for senior citizens.
Split-lot zoning	Three of the lots within the redevelopment area are split-zoned with a portion of their land area included in either or both the R-2 and R-3 zones. This plan is not intended to expand the boundaries of the business-zoned portion of the village nor does it supersede the zoning limitations applicable to split-zoned lots or the residentially zoned portion of any lot.
Wastewater implications	It is acknowledged that mixed-use development patterns that include residential uses may have implications for increased wastewater disposal. As part of the wastewater management study to be undertaken in implementing this plan, consideration should be given to finding economical solutions that would support the plan's residential protection goals.

Nonresidential Land Uses: The redevelopment area encompasses the entire B-1 zoning district. The B-1 Zone is intended as a "neighborhood" commercial district, meaning that the uses permitted should be of a limited scale and type so as to be compatible with the existing and surrounding residential neighborhood. B-1 zoning regulations allow single-family dwellings, retail stores selling food, banks, and offices of specified professions and medical service providers. Other retail uses, beauty salons, barbershops and other services, as well as restaurants, are not permitted under current regulations.

While some broadening of the permitted uses in the B-1 Zone may be desirable in terms of encouraging redevelopment and providing services for Harding residents, the scale and pedestrian orientation of all permitted uses is fundamentally important to maintaining the traditional village character of New Vernon. For these reasons, the following policies should be implemented as part of this redevelopment plan.

NONRESIDENTIAL LAND USE POLICIES	
Mixed uses	Retail and service uses shall be restricted to the first floor or street level (and if applicable, basement space) of buildings in the B-1 Zone. Office uses (including the Post Office) should be generally limited to the first floor, but may be developed in a second story if there is also a residential use on the site.
Service uses	Certain service-oriented uses should be permitted in the B-1 Zone, including a hairdresser, barber, interior decorator, and seamstress/tailor (but not including cleaning services).
Retail uses	Small-scale retail uses should be permitted including antiques shops, art dealer/gallery, and florists.
Food service	Restaurants and "fast food" establishments should continue to be prohibited in the B-1 Zone, especially in view of the wastewater disposal and off-street parking needs. However, a small-scale coffee shop with limited food service should be permitted, subject to size limitations that maintain the neighborhood atmosphere of the village and avoid generating large amounts of traffic or a need for significant additional parking. Typical patrons would be in the village to visit the Post Office or Library or run other errands nearby. There should be a limitation on the hours of operation so as to minimize conflicts with residential uses.
"Drive-thru" facilities	"Drive-thru" windows should be prohibited in connection with any business in the B-1 Zone. The development of such a facility is wholly contrary to the goals and objectives of this redevelopment plan and the Harding Township Master Plan. Such uses revolve exclusively around motor vehicles, and undermine the traditional pedestrian orientation of the village. They can also have negative impacts on nearby residential uses and on the village as a whole, by inducing car stacking, prolonged motor vehicle noise, headlight glare, and increased air pollution.

Public Safety Improvements and Circulation

Pedestrian Pathways: An important objective of this plan is enhancing the pedestrian orientation of the village core. Very limited pedestrian pathways exist along the easterly side of Village Road in front of the Deli and leading to the Ward Real Estate Office. A limited pathway system also exists around the Tunis-Ellicks House site but there are otherwise no pathways at all along the westerly side of Village Road. A coordinated system of pedestrian pathways within the redevelopment area is needed and should be planned to serve new uses and provide linkage with other uses including existing residences. Crosswalks can be developed to provide safe street crossings where needed. The pathway system can be implemented over time in connection with the redevelopment of specific properties within the redevelopment area and, if necessary, by the township. It should, however, be an important priority in the overall revitalization of the village.

Village Parking: Perhaps the most serious constraint on site development or redevelopment in the redevelopment area is the small size of the lots. For business development, it is necessary to accommodate the building layout, a compliant wastewater disposal system, a potable water supply source, storm water management, off-street parking and landscaping/site improvements. If historic structures are present on the site, their preservation may be complicated by the need to fulfill all of the foregoing requirements.

To help ameliorate these development difficulties, the township will construct a village parking area behind the Tunis-Ellicks House in conjunction with a parking area for the Library. Additional studies need to be performed to determine exactly how much additional parking can be provided, along with proper access for the DPW portion of the lot. Once this is determined and the parking area completed, the township can develop an appropriate mechanism to allow businesses to utilize the shared parking arrangement, provided they are reasonably related (in terms of proximity and pedestrian access) to the village parking area. Businesses utilizing the village parking area will be able to devote more of their land area to satisfying wastewater requirements and other site improvements. Another important beneficial impact of this shared parking arrangement is that it helps avoid multiple parking areas on each of the lots, a development pattern that is not pedestrian friendly and is inconsistent with the goal of maintaining and preserving the character of the Historic District.

Fire Safety Cistern: Limited public water supplies exist in Harding for fire-fighting purposes and no public water supply lines exist or are planned in the New Vernon Village area. In view of the population density in the village and the close proximity of both commercial and residential structures to one another, the township plans to construct a cistern in the village core to provide a water source for fire fighting. The cistern will be constructed on the township lot beneath the parking area to be installed to serve the Library and/or village parking.

Traffic Control: The goal of enhancing the village's pedestrian orientation by establishing pedestrian friendly improvements and uses can be thwarted by increased traffic volumes and motor vehicle speed. For this reason it is important that the goal of revitalizing the village be balanced by the need to protect pedestrian safety and the protection of the residential atmosphere of the area.

By and large, the neighborhood commercial orientation of permitted business uses, in combination with the FAR limitations of the B-1 Zone, help to avoid high traffic generators. Nonetheless, additional steps should be undertaken to help control traffic in the village area. The township will pursue an investigation of "traffic-calming" techniques that could be put in place to enhance public safety including seeking a lowering of the speed limit on Village Road within the redevelopment area to 25 MPH, installing crosswalks using textured materials, traffic enforcement, and other traffic-calming improvements.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AND CIRCULATION	
Pedestrian pathways	A coordinated system of pedestrian pathways and crosswalks will be planned to serve the redevelopment area.
Village parking	The township will construct a shared parking area in conjunction with parking for the Library and will develop a mechanism to provide businesses with the ability to utilize village parking in lieu of individual on-site parking areas.
Fire safety cistern	A cistern will be installed on township land beneath the Library parking area and/or village parking area.
Traffic control	The township will conduct a study of traffic-calming techniques that could be put in place to enhance public safety and the pedestrian friendly and residential nature of the village.

Wastewater Management

None of the lots in the redevelopment area has a wastewater (septic) system designed in compliance with current local and state regulations. While none of the private systems is currently failing, there is evidence of at least one past failure and the need for water treatment on at least one site. The small size of the village would not likely support the expense of construction and maintenance of a public wastewater treatment or potable water supply system. Moreover, the planning of any such systems would be inconsistent with state and local planning goals for this environmentally sensitive planning area (Planning Area 5) as described previously.

The small size of lots in the village does, however, complicate site development based on modern zoning and building requirements and can make the installation of new systems problematic. This acts as a deterrent to investment in the village and may be counterproductive to the goals of this plan. For this reason, the township intends to investigate alternative methods of dealing with wastewater management in the village area. This is important both in terms of ensuring proper wastewater disposal and protecting the village's private potable water supplies. An engineering study will be undertaken to identify problem areas and possible solutions that do not compromise Harding's planning area designation and the township's overarching planning goals relating to continued reliance on private wastewater systems.

Historic Preservation

Historic preservation goals are well founded in the township's Master Plan. With abundant historic resources both in historic districts and in other areas throughout the township, Harding has had a long tradition of encouraging the preservation and restoration of historic structures. This is particularly important in New Vernon Village where a state and nationally registered district has been identified. District registration, however, does not *regulate* the actions of private individuals. It only requires that plans for physical improvements in the district that are proposed by government agencies be reviewed for their impact on the District.

This plan supports historic preservation goals in a number of ways. Most notably, the concept of village parking, set back away from Village Road, together with pedestrian pathways, will help refocus the village as a pedestrian oriented village and provide greater flexibility in site layout so as to make historic preservation a realistic possibility. In addition, the scale and type of development permitted in the B-1 Zone will be maintained at a level compatible with the existing scale of buildings in the village.

Zoning Incentive for Historic Preservation: Additional action is needed to encourage historic preservation and restoration in the village and especially the integrity of historic structures and their setting. An updated survey of historic structures in the New Vernon Historic District has recently been completed. Using the updated survey as a basis, the Historic Preservation Commission should identify specific structures within the redevelopment area that should be preserved and restored. Special zoning incentives can be provided to encourage the preservation of historic structures when proposed for redevelopment. Specifically, an increase in the floor area ratio (FAR) limit in the B-1 Zone should be allowed when a development proposal involves the retention of historic structures. The present FAR limit in the B-1 Zone is 15% while the actual average in the redevelopment area is over 20% (not including the township's land).[5]

There should, however, be a review of zoning incentives and site development solutions to ensure that they have the desired effect. If needed, modifications can be made so as to continue support for the plan's overall objectives.

Redevelopment Area Design Guidelines

To more effectively preserve the scale and character of the village, historic structures and the integrity of the New Vernon Historic District, the township will develop design guidelines that will guide new development or redevelopment. The guidelines should establish parameters for building orientation, building shape, and site layout. They should also identify appropriate materials for building construction and other physical improvements including pedestrian pathways and include illustrations to help educate developers and the public. The guidelines will be developed in consultation with a qualified historic specialist or architect and the township's Historic Preservation Commission.

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[5] The average FAR (of the privately owned lots) equals 19.43% not including basement floor area, and 24.52% including basement floor area.

LAND ACQUISITION AND RELOCATION

Land Acquisition

Although land acquisition is not necessary in connection with the construction of the Library, village parking, cistern or pedestrian pathways, the township does have the power, under the Redevelopment Law, to acquire land through negotiation or eminent domain to carry out the purposes of this plan. If, within a reasonable period of time, private developers do not respond to the plan for establishing the Post Office within the redevelopment area, the township will consider site acquisition for its development. Section XI contains additional information concerning the time frames for implementing this redevelopment plan.

Relocation

The township does not anticipate the need to provide relocation benefits in connection with the implementation of this Redevelopment Plan.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE HARDING TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Master Plan Objectives

The objectives of this redevelopment plan are fully consistent with local planning objectives as expressed in the township's Master Plan. The township's vision for the village area is clearly stated in the Land Use Plan Element of the Harding Township Master Plan (page 18-7):

> *The village of New Vernon has long served as a focal point and gathering place for the Harding community. The pedestrian scale of the village with the Post Office, a small store, bank and professional offices, surrounded by low-density residential uses should be maintained.*

Additional Master Plan goals and objectives relate to the preservation of the township's historic character. The plan encourages public and private efforts to save historic structures and to undertake new construction (or redevelopment) in ways that will preserve the qualities of historic areas and maintain the village as a focal point for the community (Harding Township Master Plan, Land Use Plan Element, page 18-7).

> *The loss of historic structures in the neighborhoods or villages of New Vernon, Green Village and Mt. Kemble Lake and surrounding areas is an ever-increasing problem as the township continues to grow. Public and private efforts to save historic structures should be encouraged and new development in or near historic sites should be undertaken in ways that will preserve the historic qualities of these areas.*

With regard to wastewater treatment, this plan is consistent with the Harding Township Wastewater Management Plan as well as the NJ Northeast Water Quality Management Plan.

The B-1 Zone

The purpose and intent of the B-1 Zone is described in the Harding Township Master Plan, Land Use Plan Element, page 18-10:

> *The Master Plan incorporates the New Vernon Village commercial district within a business zone that provides for very specific types of commercial activity on 9,000 square foot lots along Village Road west from Millbrook Road. Only 11 lots[6] are included in this district and the area contains the existing limited commercial and office uses in New Vernon including a small bank branch, real estate offices, an architect's office, an automobile repair shop, the Post Office, and a small grocery/deli. The types of uses which presently exist and which are permitted uses in the zoning ordinance are restricted to neighborhood commercial uses. The zoning regulations adopted in 1967 provide for single-family dwellings, retail stores selling food, banks, and professional offices.*
>
> *The existing lot pattern in the B-1 area and the restriction of the commercial use to a depth of 150 feet along Village Road precludes the establishment of any major retail or office facilities in this district. The compatibility of the retail and office uses, and especially the Post Office, within the New Vernon village area is important in terms of maintaining the historical character of New Vernon which has been the cultural center of Harding Township since pre-Revolutionary War days.*

This redevelopment plan is substantially consistent with the B-1 zone plan. However, this plan places specific emphasis on the preservation of the zone's residential uses and proposes additional opportunities to strengthen the viability of the village business area so as to return the village to its traditional role as a focal point and gathering place for township residents.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The Redevelopment Law requires that the redevelopment plan address any significant relationship to other plans, including those of other municipalities, the County, and the State. In general, this redevelopment plan has no significant relationship with the plans of other communities, and it is substantially consistent with county and state plans.

Plans of Other Municipalities and Morris County

The proposed redevelopment will have no substantial effect upon the plans of any adjacent municipality to Harding Township for the following reasons. First, New Vernon is a small-scale village, centrally located within Harding. As a result, it is substantially removed from the municipal

[6] 12 lots are included in the district.

borders with any adjacent municipality. Second, the redevelopment activities that this plan intends to promote are consistent with the established traditional scale and character of the historic village. As such they are of modest scale and intensity in comparison to the existing and planned development patterns in adjacent municipalities.

The plans of Morris County, as they relate to Harding Township, have been conceived to promote and generally to be consistent with the land use and planning objectives of the township. In particular, the County supports historic preservation in its planning and regulatory role, and, in recent years the County has placed more emphasis on planning for pedestrian oriented development. As such, this plan is consistent with the County's planning goals.

State Development and Redevelopment Plan

Harding Township is, almost in its entirety, designated as an *environmentally sensitive* planning area (PA-5) in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The overall planning policies and goals for PA-5 areas are to promote the preservation and conservation of the environmentally sensitive features and resources in such areas. In particular, development should be encouraged in the state's existing villages and towns. The redevelopment activities promoted by this redevelopment plan are consistent with the goals and policies of the State Plan because:

- They promote the continuation and enhancement of New Vernon as the township's traditional center with a mixed-use development pattern and pedestrian orientation.
- Public institutions (Post Office and Library) and affordable housing will be "center based."
- They seek to promote the preservation of historic resources.

RELATIONSHIP TO DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

The designated redevelopment area encompasses the entire B-1 zoning district and a very limited portion of the R-2 and R-3 zones as well as Public Land. This plan is substantially consistent with the zone plan for these zones, and in particular, the B-1 Zone. It is designed to implement general Master Plan and zone plan goals as part of a specific comprehensive plan, with specific policies and recommendations intended to revitalize the village area and restore it as a focal point for the entire community.

As indicated previously, this plan specifically supersedes B-1 zoning regulations by broadening permitted uses and modifying the floor area ratio limitation as an incentive to development that preserves historic structures. In the future, other recommended activities such as the construction of village parking will enable the township to modify the B-1 off-street parking requirements for businesses in the village core.

The table below summarizes the zoning modifications applicable to the designated redevelopment area. All zoning regulations otherwise applicable to the lots and zoning districts within the redevelopment area shall continue in effect, to the extent that they are not superseded by the specific modifications below. In accordance with NJSA 40A:12A-7, the Harding Township Zoning Map

will be amended to indicate the designated redevelopment area to which this plan applies. For clarity, and to ensure that the general public will be aware of these immediate and proposed future zoning modifications, the Zoning Ordinance should be amended consistent with this redevelopment plan.

SUMMARY OF LAND USE AMENDMENTS AND POLICIES	
Permitted businesses and mixed uses in the B-1 Zone	1. Mixed business and residential use shall be permitted. 2. Retail and service uses shall only be permitted on the first floor (and below grade). 3. Office uses (including a Post Office) shall be permitted on the first floor (and below grade) and on the second floor, if there is also a residential use elsewhere on the site. 4. Additional service uses in the B-1 Zone shall include a hairdresser, barbershop, seamstress and/or tailor (but not including cleaners), and an interior decorator service. 5. Additional retail uses in the B-1 Zone shall include antiques shops, art dealers/galleries and florists. 6. A small-scale coffee shop shall be permitted with limited seating and hours of operation. Full service restaurants shall not be permitted. 7. "Drive-thru" windows or facilities shall not be permitted.
Permitted residential uses in the B-1 Zone	Rental apartments shall be permitted on any lot, including, but not limited to the second floor of any business building. Boarding for up to 2 persons shall be permitted in any single-family dwelling.
Floor area ratio (FAR) in the B-1 Zone	The FAR shall be limited to 15% for business uses. When a business development includes the retention of the principal historic structure(s) and its historic integrity, the FAR shall be limited to 20%.
Off-street parking requirements in the B-1 Zone	Off-street parking requirements should be relaxed for businesses that have realistic and safe pedestrian access to a shared parking facility.

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE TO IMPLEMENT PLAN WITHIN PROGRAM TIMEFRAMES

The Township Committee intends to implement this redevelopment plan without appointing a separate redevelopment agency. The Township Committee will utilize the powers, as necessary, granted to the municipality under the Redevelopment Law to undertake each component of the plan.

Following is a general outline of the estimated timeframe for the implementation of each component of this redevelopment plan. The township intends to revisit the progress of implementing this plan after a three-year term. It is the intent of the Township Committee that as each component of the plan is completed, the township's role in implementing the plan will be fulfilled. If, after the three-

year review takes place, any aspect of this redevelopment plan remains unfulfilled, the Township Committee shall conduct a public hearing at which time input will be solicited from the public as to whether the redevelopment program should be continued or modified. The estimated timeframe refers to a period from the date of adoption of this redevelopment plan.

REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TIMETABLE		
PLAN COMPONENT	STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME
Post Office	1. Continue study of site development alternatives to induce private development and investment. 2. Make determination that it is necessary for the township to acquire a site to establish the PO.	1. Ongoing 2. 3 months
Library	Enter into an agreement with Harding Library Association for ground lease of township site (including timeframes for project design, fundraising, and construction by the Harding Library Assn).	3 months
Incentives for business and encouraging residential uses	1. Adopt new permitted use and building limitations in the Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with the redevelopment plan. 2. Consider acquisition of lots and/or residential zone boundary alignment to achieve residential use goals.	1. 3 months 2. 6 months
Affordable housing	Monitor any new fair share obligation published by COAH and consider including the redevelopment area in a new affordable housing plan, if necessary.	9 months
Public safety improvements and circulation: --Pedestrian pathways --Village parking --Fire safety cistern --Traffic control	1. Develop concept plan for pedestrian pathways, village parking area and cistern as part of Library site development. 2. Investigate traffic-calming methods and consider amending the redevelopment plan to include recommended improvements, as necessary.	1. 6 months 2. 6 months
Wastewater management	1. Undertake analysis of alternatives and solutions. 2. Public presentation of recommendations. 3. Implement recommendations (as an ordinance or amendment to the Redevelopment Plan, as appropriate).	1. 2 months 2. 3 months 3. 6 months
Historic preservation	1. Identify structures to be preserved. 2. Historic Preservation Commission to contribute to recommended design guidelines (below).	1. 3 months 2. 3 months
Redevelopment Area design guidelines	1. Prepare design guidelines. 2. Public presentation of recommendations. 3. Adopt design guidelines (as an ordinance or amendment to the Redevelopment Plan, as appropriate).	1. 3 months 2. 4 months 3. 6 months

Attachments

Map of New Vernon Redevelopment Area – Development Sites
Map of New Vernon Redevelopment Area – Zoning Boundaries

Introduced March 6, 2003
Adopted May 7, 2003

HARDING TOWNSHIP

ORDINANCE 6 -03

ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE NEW VERNON VILLAGE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF HARDING

WHEREAS, by Resolution adopted on February 5, 2003, the Harding Township Committee found that Lots 1, 57, 58, 60, 61, 61.01 and 61.02 in Block 17 and Lots 3, 3.01, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in Block 18 on the Harding Township Tax Maps (the "Redevelopment Area") is an area in need of redevelopment pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq. (the "Redevelopment Law"); and

WHEREAS, at the request of the Harding Township Committee Susan C. Kimball, Professional Planner, of Kimball & Kimball has prepared a redevelopment plan entitled "New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan"; and

WHEREAS, the Harding Township Committee has determined that the New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan provides a suitable plan for the revitalization and redevelopment of the Redevelopment Area pursuant to the Redevelopment Law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HARDING, IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY, as follows:

Section 1. The "New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan" prepared by Susan C. Kimball, Professional Planner, dated March 6, 2003 is hereby adopted as the redevelopment plan for the Redevelopment Area.

Section 2. The Harding Township Zoning Map is hereby amended to provide that the lots included in the Redevelopment Area shall be designated as the "New Vernon Redevelopment Area" and the Zoning Map shall be revised accordingly.

Section 3. The Harding Township Committee shall act as a redevelopment agency and is hereby authorized to use all the powers and authority granted pursuant to the Redevelopment Law to undertake the New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan.

Section 4. A copy of this Ordinance and the New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan shall be submitted to the Harding Township Planning Board for their report concerning the Redevelopment Plan and the Redevelopment Plan's consistency or inconsistency with the Master Plan of the Township of Harding.

Section 5. This Ordinance shall not take effect until the Harding Township Committee has reviewed the Harding Township Planning Board's report on the Redevelopment Plan or as otherwise provided by N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7(e).

Adopted: May 7, 2003

ATTEST:

Richard C. Wiedmann,
Township Clerk

TOWNSHIP OF HARDING,
IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS

John R. Murray, III
Chairman

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