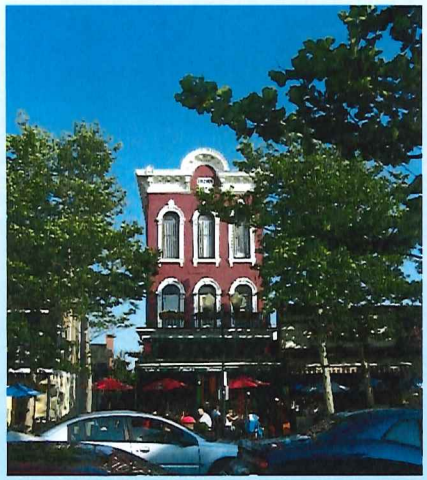

Freehold Borough Vision Report

A Bold and Attainable Vision for Our Community

Fall 2016

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Executive Summary

The Borough of Freehold has changed considerably over the last 50 years. Inevitably, change will continue. These simple statements raise fundamental questions that our community will need to answer. Most importantly,

Who will decide how Freehold Borough should grow?

How we, as a community, answer that question has significant consequences for our town. We cannot leave it to chance or rely on outside forces to decide what is good for Freehold Borough. Rather, our community should guide Freehold Borough's future. This Vision Report, a volunteer project of the Freehold Borough Community Redevelopment Committee, is an important first step in that effort.

The Vision Report sets forth a bold and attainable vision of the future of our town. Prepared by a wide-ranging cross-section of community stakeholders, it is presented in the context of Freehold Borough's past redevelopment efforts and upcoming redevelopment opportunities. Looking back to the 2008 Visioning and Revitalization Plan, it is no surprise that the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel recognized it as a sound planning document. However, as ULI also noted, the 2008 Plan lacked key elements necessary to realize opportunities for development and project funding. As a result, the plan did not spur revitalization in the Borough as intended.

Nonetheless, Freehold Borough has incredible opportunities before it. For example, census data shows people are seeking out and moving into urban areas at the highest rate since World War II. Our small community has the "bones" of a true American downtown, making it very attractive to residents and developers alike. Drawing in the segments of the population driving this trend (namely, millennials and "empty nesters") could be transformational for Freehold Borough.

Additionally, the Borough is applying to the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJ DOT) for designation as a Transit Village. To fund the planning studies required for the Transit Village application, the Borough sought and received a federal grant from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). This means the NJTPA has hired a group of professional planners and engineers who will investigate the properties surrounding the bus station and provide guidance on how to revitalize that area of town. This creates an unprecedented opportunity for the Borough to begin preparing real and achievable redevelopment strategies – without having to pay for it ourselves. For this reason, the Committee has recommended the Borough make the geographical area around the bus station the focus of its initial efforts to implement this Vision Report. (See Appendix A for a map of the Transit Village study area.)

The Committee's recommendations go further. After reviewing several redevelopment projects in the Northeast, the Committee identified three crucial ingredients that are necessary to achieve stunning redevelopment projects that both honor our historic character and further our community's shared values. First, it is essential that the Borough hires a knowledgeable economic development professional to be accountable for creating successful redevelopment projects in the Borough. Second, a broad range of community stakeholders must remain engaged in the planning and development process to make sure community values are respected and promoted by proposed projects. Finally, it is critical to choose redevelopers who see themselves as community partners willing to implement *our* vision for the future.

This Vision Report does not recommend specific redevelopment sites or projects. It does not attempt to answer all the questions raised by the prospect of undertaking a redevelopment initiative. Instead, it outlines the values and goals we support as a community, which are to be used when evaluating the suitability of future redevelopment proposals. It is intended to guide our town's growth through both short- and long-term phases of the development process. It should be revisited at least annually but should only be revised to stay aligned with our community's shared vision for the future.

Freehold Borough is unique in that we have unparalleled community and historic resources. Our residents will not settle for redevelopment projects that are simply "good enough." The Freehold Borough community expects and deserves more than that. This Vision Report is a guide to ensure that the future Freehold Borough is the kind of place where we all want to live and work.

Introduction

Early in 2015, a well-regarded real estate developer came to tour Freehold Borough. It was his first visit to the Borough, although he had recently made a multi-million dollar investment in a nearby community. After walking around downtown with local leaders, the developer asked how the Borough intended to grow and whether it was open to partnering with private developers on specific redevelopment projects. The Borough's leaders sought to answer these questions in a way that would honor the Borough's history, residents and local businesses. They found, however, that the Borough's most recent visioning document was the 2008 "Visioning and Revitalization Plan for the Freehold Center Core Redevelopment Plan Area." They did not have an up-to-date planning document setting out the community's goals for how the Borough should grow. Concerned that this information gap might allow outside entities to control the course of development in the Borough, the leadership undertook a planning process designed to give the community an active role in crafting Freehold Borough's future.

This planning process began with an invitation to the local chapter of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to convene a Technical Assistance Program Panel (TAP Panel) to:

1. Investigate the development resources available within the Borough;
2. Identify impediments to successful and sustainable growth; and
3. Put forward local land use strategies to overcome those challenges.

ULI conducted a comprehensive analysis of these issues, and prepared a written report summarizing its findings. The TAP Panelists then met with stakeholders to outline a series of steps the Borough could take toward achieving a comprehensive and community-supported growth and development plan.

Following that meeting, the Mayor and other Borough leaders convened a group of stakeholders to serve as a visioning committee. The group was charged with developing a written report setting forth the community's vision for growth. The committee was comprised of Borough residents, local business owners and operators, members of Downtown Freehold, and municipal officials. Several committee members had professional land use and/or real estate development experience.

Over the next six months, the visioning committee worked to identify the keystone values of the Freehold Borough community-at-large, and to set down goals and strategies to guide development that would support those community values. This Vision Report is the result of the committee's work. It reflects a careful consideration of the economic and social situations operating in this remarkable community, and sets forth **a bold and attainable vision for the future of Freehold Borough.**

Focus Areas

This Vision Report is intended to serve as a framework for growth throughout Freehold Borough, but the committee has determined that its implementation should begin in the area surrounding the Freehold Borough Bus Station. Freehold Borough has applied to the New Jersey Department of Transportation for designation as a Transit Village. If awarded, the designation would create financial incentives for the redevelopment and revitalization of the ½ mile radius surrounding the Freehold Borough Bus Station (the "Transit Village study area"). The Transit Village study area is depicted on the map at Appendix A to this Report. The Transit Village application requires the Borough to compile and submit a great deal of economic and community planning information. The Borough sought assistance in this effort through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's *Planning for Emerging Centers Program*. NJTPA awarded the Borough a federal grant to fund professional services in support of the Borough's Transit Village application.

The visioning committee has concluded that because the NJTPA grant is funding the professional planning and engineering services to support the Borough's Transit Village application, it would be beneficial to direct redevelopment efforts toward that area as well. The Transit Village investigation area encompasses sections of Throckmorton, Broad, and Main Streets that have long been characterized by neglect and underutilization.

The visioning committee recognizes that additional areas within the Borough may benefit from inclusion in future community planning exercises and that these additional areas may be considered in future phases of redevelopment. By way of example, the committee suggests that the Borough consider redevelopment of the former industrial properties, the area surrounding the racetrack, and the gateways into the Borough. This Vision Report is intended to be a foundation for those areas as well.

Elements of the Vision Report

The Freehold Borough Vision Report is designed to serve as a foundation for future planning and development efforts within the Borough. The ideals set forth in the Report should shape growth in the future. The Report includes suggestions for how to make Freehold Borough more livable and sustainable, and in this way provides guidance on how to decide community issues as they arise. The vision is set forth in the following components of the Report.

- ***Vision Statement*** *– A broad and forward looking statement of what the Freehold Borough community intends to be in the future, reflecting our community's shared values and goals.*

- ***Values*** *– Fundamental principles necessary to guide Freehold Borough's growth in a smart and strategic manner, and to provide a framework for evaluating development opportunities and land use policy in the future.*

- ***Goals*** *– Specific community benefits that should be pursued by all who participate in land use and development process in Freehold Borough.*

- ***Strategies*** *– Actions that should be undertaken in support of the Borough's goals.*

Vision Statement

Freehold Borough, the commercial, cultural, social, and historic ***hub of western Monmouth County****, will be a highly desirable and competitively sought after place to live, work, and do business. Redevelopment initiatives in and around downtown will* ***spur public and private investments*** *throughout the community. This resurgence will attract young professionals, entrepreneurs, and investors who appreciate and value the town's* ***enhanced livability, historic distinction and access to transit****. New construction will include a broad mix of commercial, residential, and public uses, offering a variety of* ***building designs and layouts that complement the town's unique history and character****. Streetscape designs will integrate furnishings, fixtures, art, and space resulting in a* ***high quality, walkable experience that is both safe and inviting****. Public spaces will intentionally foster social interaction and* ***encourage engagement in creative place-making events and activities****. A reestablished grid network of roadways and walkways throughout the area will improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation,* ***seamlessly connecting downtown, nearby transit and the surrounding neighborhoods****. Parking will be accommodated through urban design techniques that* ***reduce the number of surface lots*** *and minimize the visual nuisances of parking garages and other facilities. Emphasis placed on* ***long-term, sustainable approaches to building design and construction****, will make for a* ***healthier environment and better quality-of-life for all the residents*** *in Freehold Borough.*

Values*

1. **Connectivity.** A safe, direct, convenient and aesthetically pleasing complete streets network allows for various forms of transportation, including walking, biking, driving and public transportation.

2. **Culture.** The arts and other cultural resources, amenities and facilities create a distinctive local experience that celebrates and attracts diverse populations.

3. **Entrepreneurship.** The Borough's local business climate, leadership, and policies reflect an enthusiastic attitude and growth-oriented outlook that ensures entrepreneurs will have access to the resources and support they need to succeed.

4. **Historic Integrity.** Local initiatives promote and preserve Freehold Borough's unique history.

5. **Inclusivity.** Residents and other stakeholders actively engage in the exchange of ideas and cultures that invite and encourage participation in community processes.

6. **Quality-of-Life.** Residents and visitors benefit from a healthy community where they enjoy personal security, safe neighborhoods, and access to recreation and open space.

7. **Sustainability**. Development projects meet the economic, environmental and social needs of current residents without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**

* The Values are not presented in order of importance or weight.
**Adapted from World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). *Our Common Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Goal 1: Employ a variety of innovative mixed-use urban design and land use techniques* that:

Related Values

Connectivity

Culture

Entrepreneurship

Historic Integrity

Inclusivity

Quality-of-Life

Sustainability

- provide quality commercial, residential, and civic uses and structures that capitalize on each property's strategic location;
- encourage a variety of building types and layouts;
- respect the historic integrity and uniqueness of the community;
- elevate the experience of place through interesting streetscapes;
- offer more spaces that foster social interaction and inclusive public engagement;
- encourage walking;
- enhance circulation and mobility throughout the area; and
- emphasize connectivity to transit as well as to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Goal 2: Use strategic redevelopment tools to return vacant, parking-oriented, abandoned, and/or underutilized properties to more productive uses.

Related Values

Quality-of-Life

Sustainability

- **Provide public seminars in coordination with redevelopment professionals to inform the public and Borough officials about the tools of redevelopment, including the opportunities and responsibilities inherent in public/private partnerships.**

- **Present decision makers and community stakeholders with information on the financial risk developers face and the availability of public funding sources. The presentation should include project funding basics so that stakeholders can evaluate whether financing incentives are appropriate and necessary for particular projects.**

Goal 3: Ensure the economic sustainability of the Borough by pursuing redevelopment opportunities that increase property values, encourage reinvestment in private property, and diversify the Borough's tax base.

Related Values

Entrepreneurship

Quality-of-Life

Sustainability

- **The Borough should consider serving as the lead redevelopment entity on redevelopment projects to:**
  - **ensure that private property owners have access the benefits of redevelopment without having to navigate the redevelopment process alone; and**
  - **give the Borough access to development fees to reinvest in ongoing redevelopment efforts.**
- **Collaborate with County government to implement mutually beneficial tri-party development projects.**
- **Encourage infill and vertical development opportunities to spur investment by existing property owners.**

Goal 4: Encourage cooperative public/private partnerships and investments in amenities, technology, and infrastructure that improve the quality-of-life for all residents.

Related Values

Connectivity

Culture

Inclusivity

Historic Integrity

Quality-of-Life

- **Develop a procedure for the consideration and approval of redevelopment projects that assures potential redevelopers that the Borough is a consistent and reliable public partner, but also emphasizes the necessity of meeting the community's values and goals.**

- **Consider adopting a form-based land use code that embodies the aesthetic and economic priorities of the community, establishes consistent streetscape elements throughout the entire downtown, and includes design standards for building facades. Such a code should be flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of redevelopment projects in terms of size, scale and uses.**

Goal 5: Encourage transit oriented development taking full advantage of the Freehold Center Bus Station's potential.

Related Values

Connectivity

Quality-of-Life

- Conduct an investigation into the bus station, fire department, Borough Hall and nearby areas to determine whether an area in need of redevelopment designation is appropriate to spur private investment in a state-of-the-art transit oriented development project.

- Encourage mixed-use development projects in the area surrounding the bus station that maximize the opportunity for transit oriented facilities, associated amenities, and housing options. The housing elements of such projects should incorporate a variety of price points, ownership and rental options, sizes and styles.

- Adhere to design guidelines and best practices for transit oriented development as published by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, especially as they relate to the historic nature of Freehold Borough.

- Projects within the area surrounding the bus terminal should be fully integrated into the community and easily accessible to other destinations in town through direct, visually unobstructed, safe, and well-lit walkways, creating a pleasant experience for pedestrians.

TRANSIT VILLAGE INITIATIVE

Goal 6: Promote Green Building and construction practices that provide greater efficiency, environmental resource benefits, and/or cost savings.

Related Values

Quality-of-Life

Sustainability

- Reuse and repurpose existing historic buildings and structures.
- Create incentives for developers whose projects meet or exceed the requirements of the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Program.
- Use solar energy to light public facilities and pedestrian-activated cross walk signals.
- Use high efficiency lighting and LED traffic signals with battery backup (solar).
- Explore the use of alternative measures to improve heating/cooling systems such as geothermal, enhanced daylighting, efficient lighting, and occupant controls.
- Reduce water runoff into the storm sewer system and promote water recharge and filtration through the use of alternative stormwater best management practices such as bio-swales, rain gardens, roof gardens, and pervious pavement (in lighter use areas).
- Design pocket parks for multiple uses including open space, public art, connectivity, performance space, and bio-retention.

Goal 7: Provide people with the lasting experience of a safe, healthy, vibrant, livable, pedestrian-friendly community.

Related Values

Connectivity

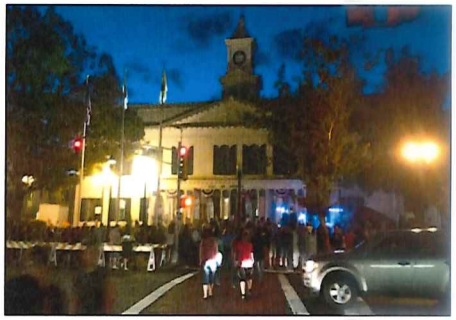
Culture

Historic Integrity

Quality-of-Life

Sustainability

- **To the greatest extent possible, projects should be cohesive within the community context, yet allow for distinctive and innovative points of interest and destinations.**
- **Projects should capitalize on site-specific development opportunities, taking into consideration the extent to which particular projects create opportunities for engaging the neighborhood (e.g., publicly-accessible courtyard/rooftop spaces within private projects).**
- **Develop a virtual and physical visitor center to educate the public about the rich history of the Borough and guide visitors to historic sites. Consider developing historic and/or architectural tours that could be coordinated through the visitor center.**
- **Adopt and implement health, safety and property maintenance codes that further enhance the quality-of-life throughout the Borough.**



Goal 8: Accommodate safe, convenient, and ample parking.

Related Values

Connectivity

Quality-of-Life

Sustainability

- Engage a parking expert to develop a comprehensive plan to address current and future parking needs and challenges in the Borough. This expert should be prepared to involve business owners, residents, and law enforcement personnel in the development and implementation of any proposed parking plan.

- Create a working group of public and private stakeholders to work with the parking expert to ensure that any proposed parking plan will:
    1. Meet the Borough's "real world" parking needs;
    2. Evaluate the pros and cons of monetizing the Borough parking system; and
    3. Minimize disruption to local businesses during the implementation of a parking plan.

- Review and consider revising parking-related codes that limit development.

- Reduce the use of downtown land for surface parking lots and return such lots to more productive uses. To the extent that it is determined that surface lots are required in certain areas, those lots and the associated pedestrian walkways should be designed as attractive elements of the site in their own right with the use of trees, landscaping, and various building materials and textures so that the façade and other improvements are compatible with the planned character of the street.

- Top decks of parking structures that are visible from other properties may be designed for uses including stormwater management and solar arrays. Regardless of use, however, top decks must include landscaping and employ design techniques sufficient to provide surrounding properties with pleasing views.

- Parking structures should incorporate mixed uses and take full advantage of street-level retail opportunities in keeping with the historic fabric and character of the surrounding structures and streetscape.

Goal 9: Incorporate design features and employ creative place-making approaches that reinforce Freehold Borough's role as Western Monmouth County's arts, culture, and entertainment destination.

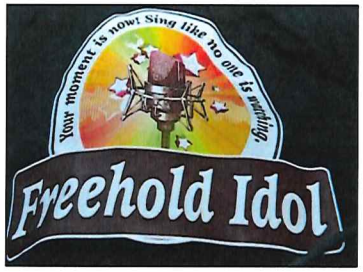
Related Values

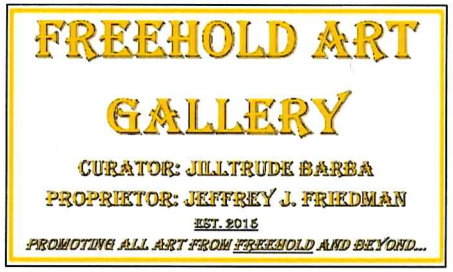
Culture

Historic Integrity

Quality-of-Life

- Projects should incorporate spaces for public use, gatherings, and performances, and include infrastructure such as Wi-Fi, electricity, lighting, seating, etc.
- Design of public spaces and amenities should include public art, incorporating sculptures, murals and the like where possible. This includes using creativity in designing and placing public amenities such as bike racks, benches, waste receptacles and other street furniture.
- Continue to support Freehold Borough as an arts district/corridor/incubator by dedicating vacant or underutilized properties as public arts resources.
- Actively pursue the establishment of a local performing arts venue.





Goal 10: Create a business climate that attracts catalytic projects into the downtown area.*

Related Values

Entrepreneurship

Sustainability

- **Engage an economic development professional that has the knowledge and experience to create economic development opportunities with private investors that will spur ongoing economic growth in town.**

- **Retain a Borough business liaison to assist new businesses with issues related to code compliance, law enforcement, and Borough resources. This professional should be prepared to interface with existing and potential business investors to identify and address impediments to development. Additionally, this professional should be prepared to explain any incentives available to businesses and property owners that locate in the Borough, and to facilitate investor access to those incentives.**

- **Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan for the Borough. The plan should emphasize the architectural, historic and cultural advantages the Borough has to offer and should focus on attracting entrepreneurs and job-creating businesses to the Borough. The plan should also highlight ongoing community arts endeavors, including live/work space for artists in and around the commercial districts.**

* Catalytic projects are "public or private projects that are planned and designed to cause a corresponding and complementary development reaction on surrounding properties. They are projects of sufficient magnitude to stimulate redevelopment of underdeveloped properties or major rehabilitation of underutilized buildings." "Catalyst Development Areas." www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/186821. September 22, 2016.

Implementing the Vision – Recommended Next Steps

1. Continue to engage the public in the planning process.
   - Disseminate Report in English and Spanish.
   - Invite input and provide opportunities to communicate.

2. Assemble a Professional Redevelopment Team.
   - Economic Development/Business Liaison Professional
   - Marketing/Branding Professional

3. Offer public information seminars about redevelopment and the opportunities it brings.

4. Create a Borough development/redevelopment website to disseminate information regarding ongoing projects. Offer the site in English and Spanish.

5. Pursue local planning initiatives.
   - Redevelopment investigation and planning for the Transit Village study area.
   - Parking study and related planning.
   - Develop a form based code.
   - Establish a Technical Review Committee to evaluate proposed projects.

Conclusion

The Borough of Freehold is unique, and thus requires a unique blueprint to guide future redevelopment. The elements set forth in this document provide the framework for that to happen.

This vision plan does not offer site-specific remedies, design elements, or building plans. Instead, it defines how we envision our town in the future based on a distinctive set of values. With the consensus-based goals and strategies developed by the committee, this broad vision offers clear direction for any redevelopment efforts in the Borough.

The vision is farsighted and creative, rather than reactionary. Most importantly, it will allow the stakeholders of Freehold Borough to guide the redevelopment process, as opposed to being led by or controlled by outside interests. The vision offers guidance from simple to complex issues. Whether it be wayfinding signs or paving materials, or large mixed-use developments, the plan will steer our partners in the right direction for our town. It allows for a collaborative, thoughtful process to occur in order to create successful public-private partnerships in a reimagined Freehold Borough.

One thing we can all count on: change will occur. This Vision Report will ensure that those who care most about a vibrant, healthy, and prosperous Freehold Borough are holding the reins when that time comes.

Appendix A – Transit Village Study Area

Appendix B – Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What's the single most important thing to take away from the Vision Report?**

The Freehold Borough community should be responsible for directing growth and development within its borders. The Vision Report represents the first step in making sure we don't leave that monumental decision to an outside entity. However, this Report will do no good if it is left to sit on a shelf collecting dust. To make sure that doesn't happen, the Borough should hire an economic development professional to be responsible for implementing the Vision Report. The responsibilities of this position would include:

- Coordinating redevelopment efforts across the Borough to ensure that individual projects are cohesive and further the community's goals;
- Championing the Borough to potential redevelopment partners;
- Advising the Council on redevelopment issues, including whether proposed projects would require financial assistance and what financing tools are available;
- Responding to public inquiries regarding proposed and ongoing projects and making recommendations to Council if the Vision Report needs to be amended to reflect changes in community values; and
- Helping potential redevelopment partners and new businesses navigate the Borough's approval processes.

2. **Who was on the visioning Committee?**

The Freehold Borough Community Redevelopment Committee was comprised of a cross-section of our community. The members represented the interests of larger groups of stakeholders in the Borough, including, for example,

- Borough residents;
- business owners and operators;
- the Freehold Borough Board of Education;
- the Monmouth County Division of Planning;
- local fraternal organizations;
- Downtown Freehold;
- the Freehold Borough Educational Foundation;
- local landlords;
- parents of students attending Borough schools;
- the Planning and Zoning Board; and
- the Freehold Borough Arts Council.

3. **How is this Report different? Hasn't Freehold been down this "redevelopment road" before?**
Not really. This is the Borough's first attempt at grassroots planning, where the community drives the process rather than the administration. Also, although the Borough took steps toward redevelopment in the past, there has never been a specific individual charged with implementing a redevelopment plan. The Committee believes that it is critical to put an economic development professional in place whose responsibility it will be to implement the vision set forth in the Report.

4. **Did the Committee solicit input from the community?**
Yes, and the Committee hopes that the community will continue to be involved. If you or an organization you represent would like to participate in this process, please send your comments or suggestions directly to the Committee at freeholdboroughcrc@gmail.com.

5. **Were members of our Latino community involved in this planning process?**
The Committee invited Latino residents and business owners to participate in this planning exercise, and encourages all members of the community to continue to take part in shaping the Borough's future. To facilitate access to for all our residents, the Committee recommends posting this Report on the Borough website in both Spanish and English. The Committee also recommends making hard copies available for review in public areas around town, perhaps in Borough Hall and at the Carnegie Library.

6. **Does the County support the Borough's redevelopment efforts?**
The Committee worked to ensure that this Report is wholly consistent with the County's newly adopted Master Plan. We are confident that the County will consider partnering with the Borough and a private developer to achieve mutually-beneficial goals downtown.

7. **How long with this plan be in effect?**
The Report is intended to serve as a guide for development long into Freehold Borough's future. If, as time goes on, it becomes necessary to update the Report, that can be accomplished through an amendment to the Report.

8. **How long will redevelopment take?**
Depends how quickly the Borough wants to move. The NJTPA's planners will probably start work in the first quarter of 2017. If the Borough hires an economic development professional to spearhead its efforts, it is possible that there could be a shovel in the ground in early 2020. The Report includes a timeline showing how the process could *possibly* unfold in the Borough, but there are so many variables involved that it is almost impossible to answer this question with any certainty. It is far more important to keep focused on moving forward than to speculate on how long it will take to get there.

9. **Will the history of the town be retained?**
It can be, but only if the community is proactive in implementing the goals and strategies in the Report. The Report calls on redevelopers to honor Freehold's rich history and also suggests that we, as a community, develop local initiatives to promote our history. If our community is passive about redevelopment, there is no guarantee that proposed projects would recognize or respect Freehold's history or historic character.

10. **What part of town does the Vision Report apply to?**
The Report is intended to guide development throughout the Borough, but the Committee recommends beginning implementation in the area around the bus station.

11. **Why did the Committee suggest starting with the area around the bus station?**
To take advantage of planning services being paid for by the federal government. The Borough is applying to the New Jersey Department of Transportation and NJ Transit for designation as a Transit Village. The Borough received a federal grant from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority to fund the planning efforts in support of our application. Those efforts are focused, by law, on the properties within a ½ mile radius of the public transportation hub. In Freehold Borough, that's the bus station. (See the Resources page for information on where to learn more about the Transit Village Initiative.)

12. **What is a Transit Village designation?**
The New Jersey Department of Transportation and NJ Transit designate Transit Villages to encourage the redevelopment of properties within a ½ mile radius of a public transportation hub, like our bus station. The designation opens up funding opportunities for projects within the ½ mile radius. This Report includes a map that depicts that ½ mile radius in Freehold Borough. Because Freehold Borough is geographically small, the designation could support projects in many areas of the Borough. (See the Additional Resources page of this Report for information on where to learn more about the Transit Village Initiative.)

13. **How does the Borough apply for a Transit Village designation?**
It isn't easy. The application is cumbersome, requiring the submission of a mountain of planning and engineering evidence. Fortunately, the planning grant awarded by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (sometimes referred to as the NJTPA) will pay for much of the planning work necessary for the Borough's application.

14. **If it's such a hassle to get a Transit Village designation, why do it?**
The designation brings financial benefits to the Borough and private developers to spur revitalization around public transportation hubs. Additionally, projects in Transit Village areas are highly attractive to residents and businesses alike, making those projects more attractive to developers as well. Revitalizing the area around public transportation hubs also benefit the Borough by making those areas safer and more

attractive, and increasing municipal ratables. (You can find links to more information on the Transit Village Initiative and the benefits of designation on the Additional Resources page of this Report.)

15. **Can a bus station qualify for Transit Village designation?**
Yes.

16. **How did the Borough get the federal grant?**
The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority chose the Borough to participate in its Planning for Emerging Centers Program. Through that program the Borough will receive professional planning and engineering services in support of its application for designation as a Transit Village. (See the Additional Resources page of this Report for information on where to learn more about the Emerging Centers Program.)

17. **How much was the NJTPA grant award?**
Because of the way NJTPA is administering the grant, it is perhaps more helpful to think of the grant as an award of services, rather than a monetary award. In other words, the Borough did not receive a lump sum payment from NJTPA in connection with the award. Rather, NJTPA will be hiring consultants directly with input from the Borough.

18. **Is the Borough distributing the grant money?**
No. The project is being coordinated by NJTPA, so they are in charge of hiring and paying the professional consultants who will work with the Borough on the Transit Village application.

19. **When will the NJTPA planners start work?**
As early as January 2017.

20. **What kind of project does the Committee recommended we do around the bus station?**
The Report does not recommend a specific project. Rather, it sets forth the fundamental principles that should be honored when the time comes to evaluate a specific redevelopment project proposal.

21. **What would happen to the existing bus station?**
The Report doesn't spell out what should happen to the bus station specifically. It does, however, tell redevelopers what values should be reflected in their proposals if they want community support for a project. For example, the Report tells redevelopers that Freehold Borough will support projects that "promote and preserve Freehold Borough's unique history" (p. 6). Redevelopers are invited to come forward with their best ideas for how to accomplish that goal at a redeveloped bus station.

22. **Could the Borough relocate the bus station?**
It most likely could not without a great deal of cost and effort. The Borough could not make that decision unilaterally, and the Committee is not aware of any active NJDOT or NJ Transit plans to relocate the bus station.

23. **How many new residents would a redevelopment project bring?**
That depends on a lot of variables, including the type of project being built, the configuration, size and cost of any residential units, and the amenities included with the project. This Report wasn't intended to answer that question, but rather to make sure the community has a voice in guiding development going forward.

24. **Will redevelopment bring additional students to our schools?**
It's impossible to guess how a project will change our town until we, as a community, are much further along in our planning efforts. The Report doesn't attempt to make those predictions. Instead it provides a shared community vision to guide development, rather than allowing an outside entity to decide how we should grow.

25. **How do businesses operate during construction of a redevelopment project, especially if it limits parking?**
This will depend on the nature of the project, but this is exactly the kind of issue the Borough would rely on an economic development professional and parking engineer to address. An experienced parking professional is well-equipped to recommend strategies that will minimize disruption during construction.

26. **Would a redevelopment project include affordable units?**
There's been a lot of uncertainty in this area of the law over the last few years, but not all redevelopment projects include affordable housing.

27. **Is eminent domain being considered?**
Evaluating property acquisition strategies was completely outside the Committee's mandate, but redevelopment certainly doesn't have to involve condemnation.

28. **What's the difference between designation as an "area in need of rehabilitation" and an "area in need of redevelopment"?**
There are a lot of differences, many of them legal technicalities. The bottom line is that an area in need of redevelopment designation opens the door to a wider range of supportive financing devices. That brings more developers to the table, which in turn means that the Borough will choose its private partner from a wider group of applicants. (See the Additional Resources page for information on the legal process behind rehabilitation and redevelopment designations, and on project funding issues.)

29. **Will property taxes go down if we undertake redevelopment in town?**
All of Freehold Borough's taxpayers would all love for that to happen. The Report calls for redevelopers to propose projects that increase ratables, which means it is possible that redevelopment projects could generate new revenue for the town. This is especially true if a new project is built on land that is currently tax exempt or used only for surface parking.

30. **What is a PILOT payment? I've heard that PILOT agreements take money away from our schools.**
"PILOT" stands for Payment In Lieu Of Taxes. It is a redevelopment financing tool that can help a developer close a funding gap on a project if the developer can demonstrate that the project couldn't be built without a PILOT Agreement. PILOT payments typically aren't allocated the same way as regular tax dollars, which gives the Borough greater control over how that money is spent. There is no prohibition against the Borough allocating PILOT payments toward our schools.

31. **Does redevelopment push people out?**
It doesn't have to. There are ways to manage rental assistance and relocation that can keep people and businesses in town during and after the implementation of a project. An economic development professional would be able to assist the Borough in these efforts.

32. **How do developers decide which communities to invest in?**
Developers are most likely to invest in communities where there is a clear consensus of vision and desired community outcomes from projects. Continuing the grassroots planning that led to the preparation of this Report will demonstrate that ours is a community that knows how it wants to grow. That makes Freehold Borough more appealing to investors.

33. **What's the biggest impediment to a successful redevelopment project? Does this Report address it?**
As one developer answered this question recently, it's the threat of the "Slow No." If a developer doesn't know what kind of projects a town will support, the developer risks finding out only gradually that a proposed project never could have been approved – a "Slow No." You could also call this an "Expensive No." Project planning is expensive, and that cost increases each time the developer has to revise and re-present its plans. This Report is intended to give developers guidance about the kinds of projects the Borough would support. Developers who cannot meet the community standards in the Report need not apply. Those who share our vision should bring their best ideas to the table.

34. **Why should we care about streamlining the development approval process? After all, we should thoroughly examine projects before they're approved. If that means a developer has to come to multiple public hearings, so be it. The developers can afford that, can't they?**
Maybe not. Redevelopment can be incredibly expensive in New Jersey. Developers are always concerned with managing project costs, and the riskier a project, the more expensive it will probably be to get approved. The Borough is more likely to attract high quality developers if its processes signal that it appreciates the cost of getting a project approved.

35. **Is there a practical way for the Borough to reduce the number of public hearings required for a project to be approved?**
Yes. The Borough could significantly reduce the length and complexity of its Planning Board meetings by establishing a Technical Review Committee (TRC) to review and comment on proposed projects before they are formally presented. TRCs are typically made up of Borough professionals and members of any public bodies that might be expected to weigh in on projects. In the Borough, that might mean that a developer would meet informally with the Borough engineer and a member of the Land Use Committee, the Planning Board, and the Historic Preservation Commission. Together, these representatives would identify any issues with the project as proposed, and work collaboratively to solve those issues. By the end of those informal meetings, the developer would know exactly what the final plans need to look like to get approved.

36. **Can a Technical Review Committee issue development approvals, or is a project still subject to review by the Planning Board?**
The Planning Board would still be responsible for issuing the approvals, but by time the hearing started, all the potential hurdles to approval should have been addressed. This gives the developer certainty, and reduces the time Borough volunteers spend sitting on the dais sifting through highly technical engineering details that they will ultimately rely on the Borough engineer to resolve.

37. **Can the Borough afford to hire an economic development professional?**
Can it afford not to? Hiring the right economic development professional will determine whether the Vision Report is successfully implemented or winds up as a door stop in a back office downtown. Additionally, the Committee has been told that there are legal mechanisms by which the Borough could possibly use development fees to cover the cost of hiring an economic development professional. The Committee recommends that the Borough explore these opportunities with experienced redevelopment counsel.

Appendix C – Additional Resources

1. New Jersey Department of Transportation's Transit Village Initiative: http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/village1/

2. Application for Transit Village Designation:
   http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/village/application.shtm

3. North Jersey Transportation Authority's Planning For Emerging Centers Program:
   http://www.njtpa.org/planning/regional-studies/emerging-centers

4. The North Jersey Transportation Authority's Freehold Borough Transit Village Initiative:
   http://www.njtpa.org/planning/regional-studies/emerging-centers/borough-of-freehold-transit-village-initiative

5. Monmouth County Master Plan (2016):
   https://co.monmouth.nj.us/page.aspx?ID=4197

6. ULI-NNJ Technical Assistance Panel Program for Freehold Borough, including the ULI-NNJ's Reports and supporting documents:
   http://nnj.uli.org/taps/freehold-borough/

7. An overview of the redevelopment process in New Jersey:
   http://mfhlaw.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FoLG_v6_1.pdf

8. Freehold Borough Master Plan Reexamination Report (2011):
   http://nnj.uli.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/37/2015/08/jjl-Reexam-rev-331.pdf

9. Freehold Borough Historic Preservation Advisory Commission Ordinance:
   http://nnj.uli.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/37/2015/08/Historic-Preservation-Ordinance.pdf

10. *Reaching for the Future, Creative Finance for Smaller Communities*:
    http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/Creative-Finance-for-Smaller-Communities.pdf

11. Cities Outpace Suburbs in Growth:
    http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304830704577493032619987956

12. Freehold Borough's 2008 Visioning and Revitalization Plan for the Downtown Core Redevelopment Plan Area: http://nnj.uli.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/37/2015/08/Redevelopment-Plan-1.pdf

13. Cooperation as a Catalyst for Remaking an Older Borough's Downtown: http://www.njfuture.org/smart-growth-101/smart-growth-awards/2014-smart-growth-award-winners/fanwood-block-64/

14. Sustainability, as used in the Vision Report: http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf

15. NJDOT/NJ TRANSIT Manual of Best Practices for Transit Oriented Development: http://www.nj.gov/transportation/community/village/pdf/todbestpracticesmanual2013.pdf

Appendix D – Sample Project Timeline

2016	**4thQ**	Continue to build community consensus; Council adoption of the Report or a Resolution in support of the Report; translate/post Report, etc.; begin searching for an economic development professional and redevelopment counsel; meet with NJTPA and County representatives to discuss Vision Report and to coordinate next steps.
2017	**1st Q**	Hire an economic development professional; begin NJTPA planning and engineering work; Council directs the Planning Board to investigate whether the Transit Village study area is an area "in need of redevelopment;" economic development professional begins to plan how best to disseminate information regarding redevelopment activities in the Borough.
	2nd Q	Economic development professional continues efforts to provide the public with information about redevelopment in the Borough; NJTPA's planners and the Borough's economic development professional continue work on the Transit Village application and related analyses; Council investigates whether to establish a technical review committee.
	3rd Q	Launch public website regarding Borough redevelopment efforts; NJTPA's planners and the Borough's economic development professional continue work on the Transit Village application and related analyses; NJTPA begins to prepare a report analyzing whether the Transit Village study area qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment.
	4th Q	NJTPA's planners and the Borough's economic development professional continue work on the Transit Village application and related analysis.
2018	**1st Q**	NJTPA's planners present their redevelopment findings to the Planning Board; Planning Board reports to Council regarding whether the Transit Village study area qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment.
	2nd Q	Council acts on Planning Board's recommendation regarding whether the Transit Village study area qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment; economic development professional continues to serve as a liaison to potential redevelopment partners; NJTPA's planners and the Borough's economic development professional continue work on the Transit Village application and related analysis.
	3rd Q	NJTPA's planners and the Borough's economic development professional continue work on the Transit Village application and related analysis.
	4th Q	NJTPA's planners and the Borough's economic development professional finalize and submit the Transit Village application; Council directs Planning Board to prepare a comprehensive plan for revitalizing the Transit Village study area.

2019	**1st Q**	Planning Board continues to prepare a comprehensive plan for revitalizing the Transit Village study area.
	2nd Q	The plan for revitalizing the Transit Village study area is submitted to Counsel; economic development professional begins to solicit expressions of interest from potential private redevelopment partners and coordinates these efforts with public entities, as necessary; economic development professional prepares and issues a request for qualifications to potential private redevelopment partners.
	3rd Q	Economic development professional evaluates potential redevelopment partners' qualifications and makes recommendations to the Planning Board and Council regarding selection; economic development professional begins to negotiate agreements to govern redevelopment projects within the Transit Village study area.
	4th Q	Economic development professional continues to negotiate agreements to govern redevelopment projects within the Transit Village study area.
2020	**1st Q**	Economic development professional finalizes agreements to govern redevelopment projects within the Transit Village study area; Council acts on those agreements as appropriate.
	2nd Q	Planning Board begins consideration of proposed redevelopment projects within the Transit Village study area, perhaps with input from a Technical Review Committee.
	3rd Q	Development permits are issued; construction begins on redevelopment projects within the Transit Village study area.