

Reexamination Report
of the
MASTER PLAN



Deptford's Retail Complex Centered Around the Deptford Mall

Bing Maps

PLANNING BOARD
TOWNSHIP OF DEPTFORD
GLOUCESTER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
AUGUST 2, 2023
REVISED FEBRUARY 7, 2024

Reexamination of the Master Plan

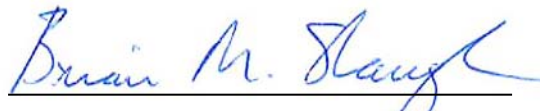
Township of Deptford Gloucester County, New Jersey

Adopted by Resolution of the Planning Board
Pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89*

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Reexamination of the Master Plan

INTRODUCTION TO THE REEXAMINATION REPORT

The Reexamination Report focuses on the planning activities of the current Master Plan and prior reexamination report in accordance with the governing statute¹. A reexamination report analyses the Master Plan's policies and determines the degree to which those policies have been affected by subsequent events. These events can encompass a wide variety of influences from economic changes in conditions, changes in the demographic characteristics of the population, climatic changes and effects, adoption of different policies at higher levels of government, new direction at the local level and similar factors.

The current Master Plan was adopted in January 2017 by the Deptford Planning Board and serves the purpose of guiding development and redevelopment of the Township. The 2017 Master Plan was the culmination of a planning effort that started in 2015 but was delayed due to the necessity to address the NJ Supreme Court's decision² concerning the Third Round of Affordable Housing which was issued in March of that year and required a flurry of activity to preserve Deptford's immunity from builder's remedy challenge³.

The 2017 Master Plan included a Reexamination Report that reviewed the prior planning efforts of the municipality, the other statutory requirements and concluded that a new Master Plan should be prepared. Consequently, the Master Plan includes various elements including Conservation, Open Space, Recreation, Community Facilities, Circulation, Land Use, a Community Design Sub-Element and Recycling Element, as well as a Statement of Goals and Objectives, and a Statement of Relationship to Other Planning Documents. A Housing Element had been adopted in 2005, 2006 and 2008 to address the changing legal and rule making environment, and as noted above, the intervention by the judicial system in approving housing plans in 2015. This led, after significant efforts, to the August 5, 2020 adoption of the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan which was approved by Judge Robert P. Becker, Jr., P.J.Ch., on May 6, 2021 and grants immunity through July 1, 2025 to Deptford.

CONTENTS OF THE REEXAMINATION REPORT

The Reexamination Report is a review of the adopted Master Plan, its amendments, and their associated development regulations which often serves as a catalyst for changes in the Master Plan and zoning ordinance, which is called the Unified Development Ordinance in Deptford. The Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), as its name implies, contains the components

¹ - N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89. The statute requires the reexamination report at least every 10 years.

² - In re Adoption of N.J.A.C. 5:96 & 5:97, 221 N.J. 1 (2015), commonly called Mount Laurel IV.

³ - Meaning a constitutional challenge that Deptford had insufficient means to address affordable housing.

of a subdivision, site plan, design and performance standards, and land use procedures ordinances along with a zoning ordinance that has been combined into one omnibus ordinance.

The Master Plan provides guidance for public and private purposes by embodying a vision of Deptford's future land use and certain programmatic activities of government. Whether implicit or explicit, the Master Plan incorporates a concept of the future which is revised over time in anticipation of, or in response to, changing circumstances – whether by economic events, the creation of new land uses, development pressure, new political leadership or changing social trends. The Reexamination Report provides the analysis necessary to determine if new policies and objectives are necessary for the Master Plan and in what specific areas. The Reexamination Report analyzes whether certain provisions of the UDO are outdated or need to be expanded to address new issues and problems that are identified. Since Deptford has designated a number of redevelopment areas, those are examined for their relationship to the Master Plan. Lastly, a relatively new change to the components of a Reexamination Report requires a recommendation from the Planning Board regarding locations for public electric vehicle charging stations. In total, the Reexamination Report has the following sections, each of which will be dealt with in turn in this document:

- 1) The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report;
- 2) The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date;
- 3) The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives;
- 4) The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared; and
- 5) The recommendations of the Planning Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.
- 6) The recommendations of the Planning Board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the

local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.

This document will be primarily focused on the policies and recommendations stemming from the 2017 Master Plan. The implementation of the Master Plan through amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance and other means has been ongoing since that time as resources permit. For example, the advantages of the use of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (*N.J.S.A. 40:12A-1 et seq.*) and its redevelopment tools have become even more widespread in Deptford and elsewhere in the state. New state statutes have been enacted since 2017 that have created mandates affecting land use directly and require municipalities to undertake new initiatives to address climate change and the transition from reliance on fossil fuel as an energy source. State administrative rules, either stemming from existing statutes or new legislation have also been adopted that have extensive effects on the development of land, most notably the adoption of new regulations for the control of stormwater and the recharge of groundwater following rainfall events, inland flooding, consideration of resiliency measures to proactively protect life and property, and provisions for electric vehicle charging.

MAJOR PROBLEMS AND POLICIES IDENTIFIED IN THE 2017 MASTER PLAN

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The 2017 Master Plan for the most part continued the goals and objectives of the 2007 Master Plan. The 2007 Master Plan was the first comprehensive master plan since the seminal one that was adopted in 1989 that charted the modern course of development in the Township. Several 2017 goals identify areas for improvement. These include acquisition of open space as the Township nears build out that is commensurate with its ultimate population, planning ahead for infrastructure and school facility needs to meet those same population increases, improve Deptford's aesthetic appearance through site planning, signage and community design standards, yet maintain good relationships with the business and development communities since their investment decisions affect Deptford's ability to meet such objectives.

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

The Conservation Element's largest listed problem was the loss of scenic areas of the municipality. Rt. 55 was proposed for scenic byway status.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

The south side of the former Lakes of Bankbridge PUD on Bankbridge Road and the area around Whispering Lakes fronting on Rt. 47 and Deptford Avenue were the top priorities for open space acquisition. The Open Space and Recreation Element also proposed the redevelopment and expansion of Fasola Park in accordance with its 2014 master plan for park development.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

The 2017 Master Plan described the Library Board's efforts to develop a new public technology center for the Deptford Township Public Library, which would allow for the reduction of its physical collection but expand digital access to more users.

The Master Plan identified a property for acquisition for expansion of the high school as the need for facilities and programs continued.

Also noted was the increasingly antiquated municipal building. Built in 1970, it lacks modern security systems, digital and communications capabilities, and the courtroom does not have access for defendants separate from the public. Lastly, the site periodically lacks adequate off-site parking. Because of the limited site area available, consideration could be made for an administrative facility at a new location while retaining the police and court system at its present location, after renovating the building to address certain shortcomings. Its location is well situated for the typical police calls related to the 3 million sf. of retail development and busy road network at the northerly end of the Township.

CIRCULATION

The 2017 Master Plan identified the need to create a specific plan for bicycle use in the municipality. Like many suburban townships, Deptford has been automobile focused. The Circulation Element identified locations where bicycle routes would be desirable to create a non-vehicular framework.

The Circulation Element continued the additional road segments to improve road travel in the Township for the western area of the shopping mall, west of Rt. 55, the east-west connector between Mail Avenue and Fox Run Road, and a new segment from Fasola Park south to Delsea Drive. Each of these would aid intramunicipal travel between neighborhoods and facilitate access to retail centers and community facilities.

LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT

The 2017 Plan recommended several areas to examine in land use in Deptford. As shopping behaviors and patterns have changed, a rethinking of uses in shopping centers beyond retail sales was evident. Some shopping centers that had fallen into poor condition with significant vacancies were creating blighting influences. The worst performing centers were identified as needing the resources of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law to reverse these tendencies. Entertainment uses, for example, were discussed as a way to create more interest, and indeed, had long been used in more successful enclosed shopping centers as a strategy to draw shoppers. It was also noted that the Planning Board had approved a 12-screen movie theater prior to the 2017 Plan that could work synergistically with retail sales and services in existing shopping centers as a regional draw to Deptford.

Reexamination of the viability of mixed residential and commercial development in the land use plan element was recommended in the 2017 Plan to determine if what was purposed in the 2007 Master Plan was still viable. These areas were mainly along Clements Bridge Road as an alternative to purely commercial uses.

HOUSING PLAN

The Township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, following the March 2015 *Mount Laurel IV Decision*, was developed and submitted to the court in draft form in March 2016. However, by that time, little agreement on affordable housing numbers was to be had and the Plan was challenged on those grounds by the assigned interested party. Intervention by Fair Share Housing Center led to extensive negotiation and another draft Plan in July 2018, which was also rejected by the intervenor. Eventually the municipality came to terms with Fair Share Housing Center in May 2019 that was set forth in a settlement agreement that established the affordable obligation. Amended in October 2020, the adopted Housing Element was approved by the Court on May 6, 2021.

CHANGE IN THE STATUS OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS AND POLICIES OF PREVIOUS PLANS

In the course of the past six years since the 2017 Master Plan was adopted there have been changes in the status of some recommendations and polices which are discussed below:

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

There is no change in the status of the policies of the Township's Goals and Objectives.

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

There is no change in the status of the policies of the Conservation Element.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

Deptford remains interested in acquiring the South Bankbridge tract, but is currently in a legal challenge over other matters with the landowner. The land surrounding Whispering Lakes remaining undeveloped and could still be purchased by the municipality. There is a concern about known dumping that occurred there in years past, so the property would need to be surveyed for potential contamination issues and realistically assessed for its recreational potential. On the positive side, land previously owned by the NJ Turnpike Authority, on the north side of the highway, was turned over to Deptford Township. These include Block 82.13, Lots 1 and 2; Block 454, Lots 2 and 4; and Block 453, Lot 4. The lots mainly contain freshwater wetlands and are expected to remain as conservation lands.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

The renovation of the Library and a small addition were schematically designed and the Library Board made application for dedicated state bond money approved in a voter referendum. Unfortunately, all of the funding was directed to North Jersey except for one small project in the southern half of the state and it was not Deptford. Consequently, this project has not moved forward. No further development has occurred with regard to the Township building, though internal renovations and HVAC equipment replacement has occurred. The offices of the Planning, Zoning and Construction Departments were combined into perhaps the most extensive of the renovations.

CIRCULATION

Additional planning work is needed to fill out the objective to develop Bicycle Facilities and place them into the capital plans of the Township, seek outside funding sources for assistance, partner with the County and adjacent municipalities, and integrate bicycle facilities into the Unified Development Ordinance. The municipality acquired a lot for the right-of-way for one of the road segments leading from Cooper Street to Greenbriar Court and should acquire additional right-of-way as part of an adjacent subdivision once the plat is recorded. However, the decision of the Inspira Health System not to move forward with their development on Clements Bridge Road means that the final piece of right-of-way necessary has yet to be dedicated.

LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT

The main influence on the land use plan element has been the mandatory obligations to address affordable housing. Each municipality in New Jersey has such an obligation stemming from the state constitution and must ensure that its land use regulations provide a realistic opportunity to meet the demand for housing from all income levels of society. From a land use perspective that has been handled primarily through two techniques: designating locations where all units are affordable to low and moderate income households (100% affordable housing) or where a percentage of dwellings are affordable to such households, typically 15-20% (inclusionary housing). The number of dwelling units was most recently set by court decision and affirmed in the Township's own settlement agreement with the state-wide intervenor.

The main economic factor affecting land development in between the 2007 and 2017 Master Plans was the Great Recession, which affected the New Jersey economy, like much of the country, from late 2007 through to 2012/2013. New Jersey's private sector employment only recovered the private sector employment it had in 2007 in 2013⁴. In Deptford, retail vacancies increased considerably, reaching up to 55% in one shopping center. Most of the shopping centers have recovered, save for the one with the highest vacancy, Deptford Crossing. This shopping center was placed into a redevelopment area in 2016 and a draft redevelopment plan prepared in 2021.

Though the movie theatre has yet to break ground; it may yet come to fruition as a recent reapplication has been made.

Medical uses were an area of land use experiencing rapid change because of regulatory and technological changes. The expansion of medical offices was expected because of the federal Affordable Care Act; medical uses as replacement for retail stores was a strategy being employed by owners seeking to fill space. Furthermore, hospital systems were undergoing significant pressures from governmental reimbursements for care, charity care and rises in the costs of medical equipment and procedures. Consolidation of hospitals and larger

⁴ - *Employment Recession and Recovery in the 50 States, a Further Update*, J. Seneca and W. Irving, Rutgers Regional Report No. 36, July 2013, Table 4, p. 10. Technically the Great Recession lasted from 12/2007 to 6/2009.

conglomerations of hospitals into integrated networks have continued, and more non-hospital providers have surfaced to provide services once only available at hospitals.

Examination of the land use policies for these uses was suggested and the allowance of a wider range of medical services made in the UDO. The successful launch of the Nemours Children's Health facility on Almonesson Road in 2016 showed the viability of this approach to diversifying non-residential development in the Township. The adaptive reuse of the Dick's Sporting Goods store for a large, integrated medical services building as part of the Inspira Health Network slated to open in 2024 is another example of this approach.

COMMUNITY DESIGN SUB-ELEMENT

This sub-element of the land use plan element supported the creation of design standards for building in the UDO to help address a surge of mediocre physical designs before the Planning and Zoning Boards. This has resulted in the ability to improve the quality of the built environment in Deptford. The establishment of the Township's streetscape design standards in 2010 has also had a visible impact on improving the view that the public most sees of the commercial corridors of the municipality. The streetscape standards could be further refined to address additional contextual situations and be more specific on the details of the accepted design.

CHANGES IN THE ASSUMPTIONS, AND POLICIES UNDERLYING THE MASTER PLAN

Since the 2017 Mater Plan there have been momentous changes to the economic, social and political fabric not only of New Jersey, but the United States and indeed the world. Perhaps foremost among those is the COVID-19 pandemic that originated in China in 2019 and rapidly spread around the world - the largest health crisis since the 1918 Spanish Flu. Governmental response or the lack thereof to the pandemic reverberates through society today and has raised or continues to raise questions about the effectiveness of public health policies and facilities. In turn, this has implications for land use in Deptford at County facilities and their needs and operations. The recognition of mental health stresses from the pandemic has also put a spotlight on the need for better support for the treatment of mental illness.

Due to the pandemic both parties at the federal level developed unprecedented income support for households. Consequently, the United States avoided a depression as governmental lockdowns to slow the pandemic were put into effect. Additional support for businesses also enabled many to avoid bankruptcy as customers stayed home – a singular worry for a town like Deptford that has a large retail sector. The pandemic lockdowns that nonetheless allowed delivery people to still work at their jobs quickly accelerated a trend away from retail spending at bricks and mortar stores to on-line ordering and household delivery, compressing perhaps a decade's worth of change into seemingly a few months of time. By necessity, bricks and mortar stores pivoted as rapidly as they could to a much larger on-line presence.

Economically, inflation has risen during this period, peaking in April 2022, but still at this point considerably higher than the Federal Reserve's target of 2% annual inflation. Several

factors have been pointed to, depending on one’s school of economic theory. Some point to too much federal stimulus money, some point to a problem of obtaining goods and services – the “supply chain” issue, others to low unemployment causing employers to raise pay to obtain new employees and retain current ones thus increasing their prices for services and goods to recoup their higher costs, or to companies taking advantage of the confusion to raise prices to increase their margin of profit. The response has been a very quick rise in the Federal Reserve’s interbank interest rates over the past year, which in turn has raised consumer and business costs to borrow money. Evidence at this time suggests a slowing of economic activity and perhaps a recession later in 2023 or in 2024, again depending on the economist making the prediction. Other economic data, such as continued strong hiring on the one hand, but bank runs and failures on the other, make this an uncertain time.

In addition to these uncertainties, there has been rapid social and political changes in the United States, many driven by newly discovered and perfected technological advancements that make for easy connections among disparate groups and information sharing, whether or not such information is objectively accurate. These changes in the public realm have made it more difficult to find a consensus about the direction and policies that should apply to growth, development and redevelopment in any particular town. Deptford is not immune to these trends, but establishing written ideas and concepts will at least allow the public to read and see for themselves what is the intent for the future of the municipality.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

The 2017 Master Plan and subsequent Housing Element noted some significant growth in Deptford since 1990 with the population increasing by approximately 6,400 people, or more than 26%. In the decade from 2010 to 2020, however, that growth slowed considerably and the population increased at only one-third the rate of the 2000’s (*see* Table 1). Something similar happened at the County level where growth between 1990 and 2000 was virtually the same as Deptford, slightly less in the 2000’s, and then just one-quarter of the rate of Deptford in the 2010’s. One way to look at this change, aside from the economic factors noted above, is that the most easily suburbanized parts of Gloucester County have already been suburbanized. Now a lack of areas where sanitary sewers may legally be built stemming from a restrictive NJDEP-adopted map in 2006 and rising costs for the construction of any utility infrastructure are prime reasons for the lack of growth in the County in addition to the larger forces at work in the economy.

Table 1. Population Change, Gloucester Co. and Deptford, 1990 to 2020

Government	1990	2000	% Change	2010	% Change	2020	% Change
Deptford	24,137	26,763	10.9%	30,561	14.2%	31,977	4.6%
Gloucester County	230,082	254,673	10.7%	288,288	13.2%	302,294	1.1%

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2010, 2020

Because Deptford, though affected by the 2006 Gloucester County Sanitary Sewer Map, was less affected than other municipalities and already had a well-developed system, it continued to have growth in the 2010's, albeit at a more modest rate compared to previous decades. In the coming decade, it is anticipated that development associated with the Township's court-approved housing plan will occur that will add to the Township's population. The NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development's municipal estimate of Deptford's population as of July 1, 2022 was 32,280 persons. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission expects very modest growth in Deptford through 2050 – essentially unchanged from today – with the highest levels expected in Monroe, Harrison and Woolwich Townships.

Table 2. Age of Population, 2010 to 2020 and 2021.

Age in Years	Number in 2010	Percent	Number in 2020	Percent	Percent Change 2010-2020	Number in 2021	Percent	Percent Change 2020-2021
Under 5	1,876	6.14%	1,648	5.2%	-12.15%	2,049	6.4%	24.33%
5-9	1,810	5.92%	1,648	5.2%	-8.95%	1,788	5.6%	8.50%
10-14	1,820	5.96%	1,849	5.8%	1.59%	2,109	6.6%	14.06%
15-19	1,871	6.12%	1,835	5.7%	-1.92%	1,646	5.1%	-10.29%
20-24	1,789	5.85%	1,851	5.8%	3.47%	1,768	5.5%	-4.48%
25-29	2,033	6.65%	2,155	6.7%	6.00%	4,693*	14.7%	6.37%
30-34	2,025	6.63%	2,257	7.1%	11.46%			
35-39	2,139	6.99%	2,039	6.4%	-4.68%	3,799*	11.9%	-2.99%
40-44	2,125	6.95%	1,877	5.9%	-11.67%			
45-49	2,391	7.82%	2,045	6.4%	-14.47%	4,744*	14.8%	13.06%
50-54	2,417	7.9%	2,151	7.9%	-11.00%			
55-59	1,978	6.5%	2,454	7.7%	-24.06%	2,445	7.6%	-0.37%
60-64	1,690	5.5%	2,367	7.4%	40.10%	1,803	5.6%	-23.83%
65-69	1,292	4.2%	1,848	5.8%	43.03%	2,826*	8.8%	-15.24%
70-74	1,045	3.4%	1,486	4.6%	42.20%			
75-79	861	2.8%	1,013	3.2%	17.65%	1,666*	5.2%	-3.64%
80-84	743	2.4%	716	2.2%	-3.63%			
85+	656	2.1%	738	2.3%	12.5%	659	2.1%	-10.70%
Total	30,561	100.0%	31,977	100.0%	4.63%	31,995	100.0%	0.06%
Median Age	39.8		41.9		5.28%	40.1		-4.30%

Source: 2010 US Census; PCT-12 Sex by Age; Census 2020 (Table DP-1); 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate (Table DP-05)

* - The American Community Survey combines these age brackets in its estimates.

The U.S. Census and the American Community Survey use different data sets. There has been concern about the integrity of the data from both the 2020 Census and the data collected in the 2021 ACS, so the conclusions to be drawn from the information presented in Table 2 should be viewed contingently, with the hope of better data in the future. Interestingly, it indicates an increase in the population in the last full decade of school age and the young adult population, and then an abrupt fall off in middle-aged persons, with an increase in the baby boom retirement contingent. It suggests young adults living with their parents and not forming their own households. The reduction in middle aged adults could have been the result early in the decade of a significant number of bank foreclosures in Deptford and those households leaving the municipality. Table 3, looks at housing units and occupancy by owners or tenants.

Table 3. Housing Units by Number of Units and Tenure of Occupant, 2021.

Number of Units	Owner Occupied	Percent of Total	Renter Occupied	Percent of Total	Vacant	Percent of Total	Total
1, Detached	7,935	87.80%	713	7.89%	390	4.32%	9,038
1, Attached	933	88.35%	65	6.16%	58	5.49%	1,056
2	10	5.68%	127	72.16%	39	22.16%	176
3 or 4	18	3.80%	456	96.20%	0	0.00%	474
5 to 9	41	6.09%	604	89.75%	28	4.16%	673
10 to 19	22	3.48%	556	87.84%	55	8.69%	633
20 or more	0	0.00%	427	91.24%	41	8.76%	468
Mobile Home	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
Other	0	0.00%	29	100.00%	20	0.00%	29
Total	8,959	71.40%	2,957	23.60%	631	5.03%	12,547

Source: Table DP-04: Selected Housing Characteristics, ACS 2017-2021; Table B25032: Tenure by Units in Structure, ACS 2017-2021.

The Housing Element from 2020, which uses the 2013-2017 American Community Survey data set, lists 3,217 occupied rental units in Deptford (Table 4 in that document), 260 more dwellings than listed in Table 3, but 498 fewer owner-occupied ones (again pointing to some of the data issues with the 2021 ACS). This could reflect a situation where houses that had been previously rented were now owner-occupied, which could account for the differences in these data sets and adding in new housing units constructed in the interim period. New housing units have been almost entirely fee simple and condominium ownership since the last Reexamination Report.

Table 4, Deptford Property Classifications for Tax Purposes, 2011-2022, on the following page, examines the increase or decrease in the number of parcels classified for different uses. Since the 2010 U.S. Census and for the next ten years or so, there has been notable increases in the number of residential lots developed, an increase in industrial development and a decrease in

agricultural uses and vacant land, according to this data. Some of this can be attributed to lot consolidation as larger parcels are created, which does not require governmental approval. The increase in the number of residential lots reflects the build out of the Locust Grove Planned Unit Development and several mid-sized residential subdivisions, such as the Landings at Cooper Street, Deptford Landing and Tanyard Acres, among others. There has also been scattered industrial development, or expansions of existing industrial businesses, primarily at the south end of Rt. 41. Commercial development – meaning office and retail uses, essentially – are relatively consistent over this time period.

Table 4. Deptford Property Classifications for Tax Purposes, 2011-2022.

Class	Parcels in 2011	Percent of Total	Parcels in 2022	Percent of Total	Number Change 2011-2022	Percent Change 2011-2022
Class 1: <i>Vacant Land</i>	1,703	13.89%	1,234	10.13%	-469	-27.54%
Class 2: <i>Residential</i>	9,983	81.41%	10,403	85.39%	420	4.21%
Class 3A: <i>Farmstead</i>	57	0.46%	32	0.26%	-25	-43.86%
Class 3B: <i>Qualified Farm</i>	134	1.09%	109	0.89%	-25	-18.66%
Class 4A: <i>Commercial</i>	341	2.78%	349	2.86%	8	2.35%
Class 4B: <i>Industrial</i>	30	0.24%	43	0.35%	13	43.33%
Class 4C: <i>Apartment</i>	14	0.11%	13	0.11%	-1	-7.14%
Total	12,262	100.00%	12,183	100.00%	-79	-0.64%

Source: Gloucester County Taxation Office, 2011 and 2022 Abstract of Ratables

RETAIL SECTOR CHANGES

As noted, there have been many and rapid changes in the retail sector that is of prime importance to the economy of Deptford.

Traditional brick and mortar stores have been steadily facing competition due to e-commerce and online shopping since the rise of these platforms in the 2000’s. According to the National League of Cities (NLC), the national growth rate of e-commerce in the last 10 years has far outpaced that of the overall retail industry – a growth of 15% year-over-year compared to only 5%⁵.

Not only is this trend expected to continue into the future, but its pace was also dramatically accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, as millions of shoppers turned to at-home deliveries and curb-side pickups to meet their needs. In 2020, e-commerce accounted for 14%

⁵ - <https://www.nlc.org/resource/future-of-cities-reenvisioning-retail-for-recovery-and-resilience/> accessed June 27, 2023

of total revenue sales, compared to just 11% in 2019 and 10% in 2018. It has also become clear that retail businesses without an online presence have failed more readily than in years past. During the pandemic, an estimated 159 million square feet of retail space became vacant compared to only 80 million square feet during the 2007-2008 Great Recession.

The Deptford Mall and Cherry Hill Mall are considered the two strongest shopping centers in South Jersey. The Deptford Mall's location within the County and its easy accessibility at the confluence of the Rt. 55 and Rt. 42 highways are assets that other regional malls, such as the Burlington Center Mall (closed in 2018 and currently being redeveloped into warehousing) and the Echelon Mall (partially redeveloped as the Voorhees Town Center in the late-2000s) could utilize.

Embracing current and future trends in technology is one key ingredient for how shopping centers are to remain relevant in the modern era. For example, most national retailers have implemented online platforms that give multiple options for how to shop, including buy online, pick up in store; buy online, pick up in locker; and buy online, curbside pickup. At the municipal level, some cities are supporting new technologies by enabling the use of personal delivery device operations for delivery of groceries and food, self-service kiosks, and semi-autonomous delivery vehicles at the mall itself. For the Deptford Mall, staff have been approached about a delivery service that would store the merchandise purchased for home delivery in a central location at the mall, thereby freeing up space in the store itself for inventory to sell.

As noted before, medical uses are finding that shopping centers make good locations for new medical facilities. They typically already have adequate parking facilities and the renovation costs are lower than building on a greenfield site. They are in a convenient location and offer the drivers of patients' other means of utilizing their time while waiting for procedures to be finished. An example of this noted above is the approval and repurposing of the former Dick's Sporting Goods store by the Inspira Health Network for a medical center in 2022. The Township anticipates future conversions of retail stores to medical uses in the future. A more explicit expansion of allowed medical uses in the BC-2 zoning district and perhaps other Business Center districts may be warranted to encourage the diversification of uses in shopping centers.

Reform of liquor licenses rules would also aid the retail sector by providing more revenue for non-chain restaurants by creating the opportunity to sell at least wine and beer to diners. Such reform would help secondary shopping centers where mom and pop restaurants are most likely to be located. At least one effort may make its way through the state legislature for a limited permit process for these small time restaurants.

STATE POLICIES

In recent years, New Jersey has made significant efforts to prioritize climate change resiliency and sustainability through a range of policies and regulations. These initiatives aim to address

an urgent need for action on climate change while promoting a clean energy future and equitable economic development. A number of major initiatives on land use policy had been undertaken by the State over the past decade.

Effect of Superstorm Sandy - In 2012, though Deptford escaped most of its effects, Superstorm Sandy lashed the Atlantic Seaboard and then crossed onto land at Brigantine on October 29, 2012 and eventually dissipated by November 2. In the United States, property damage was estimated at \$65 billion⁶.

While the intensity and damage of that storm cannot be linked directly to climate change, that is one of the predictions in the climate models of a warming earth, regardless of which model is used. The storm became a wakeup call for the necessity for better emergency management coordination during such events, as well as directly leading to amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law. In the aftermath of the storm, funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was made available to state and local communities to plan resiliency strategies and coastal hardening. The storm surge, which is the abnormal rise in seawater level during a storm, measured as the height of the water above the normal predicted astronomical tide, was studied intensively. Storm surge is caused primarily by a storm's winds pushing water onshore. FEMA studied the storm surge as well as the intensity of rainfall and developed new models to predict where flooding risk had changed. The agency then issued new Federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps at substantially higher elevations, though a new map has not yet been issued for Deptford. It also caused NJDEP to rethink inland flooding, away from the coasts, because of the new intensity of storms simply overwhelming existing storm water management systems and natural streams. Sandy also has led to ideas such as creating storm surge barriers across New York Harbor like those that exist in the Thames River to protect London and the Maeslant Barrier in the Netherlands to protect South Holland. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers unveiled a \$52 billion plan in September 2022 to build 12 moveable barriers across bays and rivers around New York Harbor⁷.

Water Quality Management Planning - At about the same time as the 2007 Master Plan, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection set deadlines for wastewater management planning that essentially required counties to submit plans by April 2009 (though extensions were eventually granted). Previously, wastewater management planning was the responsibility of the individual operator, such as the Deptford Township Municipal Utilities Authority. The state moved this responsibility to the county level and in Gloucester County; this was assigned to the Gloucester County Municipal Utilities Authority. With little notice and no dialogue, a new wastewater management plan was adopted through publication in the NJ Register in 2009. Portions of the Township were removed from the legal ability to obtain public sanitary sewer where before, the entire municipality was in the sewer service area. This has consequences for development and redevelopment within Deptford since many larger tracts

⁶ - <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/news/UpdatedCostliest.pdf>, accessed July 4, 2023

⁷ - *A \$52 Billion Proposal Aims to Protect New York Harbor from Storm Surges*, New York Times, September 26, 2022.

have sections where the sewer service potential was withdrawn and that now complicates rational land development and affected long standing sites for affordable housing in the Housing Element.

While statutory and administration rules have had the greatest impact on land use planning in Deptford, the state has also unleashed a blizzard of its own planning documents, but oddly, has not adequately funded the State Planning Commission and its staff at the Office of Planning Advocacy, who would logically be issuing these documents and coordinating all of these efforts to have cohesive state policies⁸.

State Planning Efforts - the State of New Jersey has published a series of planning documents to improve climate change resiliency and sustainability throughout the State. Some of these planning documents include:

1. New Jersey Energy Master Plan: Pathway to 2050, published 2019;
2. New Jersey's Scientific Report on Climate Change, published 2020;
3. *New Jersey's Global Warming Response Act 80 x 50: Evaluating our Progress and identifying Pathways to Reduce Emissions 80% by 2050*, published 2020; and
4. State of New Jersey Climate Change Resiliency Strategy, published 2021.

Office of Climate Action and the Green Economy - Governor Murphy signed Executive Order #221 in 2021 which established the Office of Climate Action and the Green Economy. The new office will focus on the interlocking priorities of addressing climate change, ensuring New Jersey's clean energy future, and transitioning to a green economy while prioritizing equity and environmental justice.

Zero and Low Emission Transportation Projects - New Jersey currently is supporting the development of various zero and low emission transportation projects through the following programs:

1. VW and RGGI. New Jersey is investing over \$100 million in clean transportation projects using funds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and the Volkswagen Mitigation Trust. The projects include electrification programs, equitable mobility initiatives, and electric charging infrastructure in environmental justice communities.
2. EDA NJ ZIP. The Zero-Emission Incentive Program (NJ ZIP) is a voucher program that supports businesses and institutions in purchasing new medium-duty zero-emission vehicles. The program focuses on the Greater Newark, Greater Camden, Greater New Brunswick, and shore areas.

⁸ - However, in the late summer and early fall, 2023, the State Planning Commission – now with a full board – held a series of listening sessions around the state to discuss the content and process of a new state plan.

3. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program. The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) provides funding for projects that aim to reduce emissions in northern and central New Jersey. Projects funded under the Transportation Clean Air Measures (TCAM) program include EV charging stations, electric shuttles, and electric charging infrastructure installations.
4. TCI Cap and Invest. New Jersey is part of the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI), a regional collaboration of 13 states and the District of Columbia. The TCI program aims to reduce carbon emissions from on-road vehicles and invest in cleaner transportation options. The program generates revenue through the sale of emission allowances, which is then used to fund low-carbon transportation projects.
5. Electricity Grid Impacts from Charging. New Jersey is expanding its renewable energy portfolio, including solar and wind energy, to achieve its goal of 100% clean energy by 2050. As more electric vehicles are adopted, the average unit cost of electricity is expected to decrease, benefiting all electric utility customers. Managed charging scenarios can further optimize the use of existing power assets and infrastructure.

Green Infrastructure Requirements - On March 2, 2020, NJDEP published amendments to the Stormwater Management rules, in N.J.A.C. 7:8. The new rules, which took full effect on March 21, 2021, require that green infrastructure (GI) best management practices (BMPs) be used to meet groundwater recharge standards, stormwater runoff quantity standards, and stormwater runoff quality standards. Under the prior rules, GI BMPs were only required to the “maximum extent possible.” The new rules effectively will require decentralized, distributed stormwater management practices that enable stormwater to infiltrate and more closely emulate the natural water cycle. The effect seen so far is to require even more land area to mimic natural systems, thereby reducing developable acreage.

Inland Flood Protection Rule - New rules to address inland flooding were just released by NJDEP and are slated for imminent adoption⁹. NJDEP published proposed amendments to the rules governing Stormwater Management, N.J.A.C. 7:8, and the Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules, N.J.A.C. 7:13 on December 5, 2022. As a response to Tropical Storm Ida, these proposed amendments and new rules are designed to ensure that development in flood prone areas and stormwater management systems throughout the State are constructed to more protective standards that reflect projected precipitation due to a changing climate, especially as to increased precipitation events. Key changes from the new rules include:

1. New Design Flood Elevation raises fluvial (non-tidal) flood elevation mapped by NJDEP by two feet;
2. Requires use of future projected precipitation when calculating flood elevations;

⁹ - See <https://dep.nj.gov/rules/notice-of-rule-proposals/20221205b/>, accessed July 4, 2023.

3. Ensures that NJDEP's Flood Hazard Area permits conform to NJ Uniform Construction Code standards and meet or exceed minimum FEMA National Flood Insurance Program requirements;
4. Requires stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be designed to manage runoff for both today's storms and future storms; and
5. Removes the use of the long used Rational and Modified Rational methods for stormwater calculations.

Wind Energy - Governor Murphy's has promoted the development of renewable energy, in particular wind energy, through a number of executive orders.

Successor Solar Incentive Program - on July 28, 2021, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities established the Successor Solar Incentive Program (SuSI Program) in order to enable the continued efficient and orderly development of solar renewable energy generating sources throughout the state. The SuSI Program implements the Clean Energy Act of 2018 (L. 2018, c.17) and the Solar Act of 2021 (L. 2021, c. 169) and replaces the prior Solar Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) Program and the Transition Incentive (TI) Program. The SuSI Program contains two sub-programs:

1. The Administratively Determined Incentive (ADI) Program provides administratively set incentives for net metered residential projects, net metered non-residential projects of 5 MW or less, all community solar projects. There are two community solar projects in Deptford, one built by AC Power 7 off of Delsea Drive and the other is pending state permits on Almonesson Road by Herskowitz, LLC.
2. The Competitive Solar Incentive (CSI) Program will be open to qualifying grid supply installations and non-residential net metered solar installations with a capacity greater than five (5) megawatts (MW) and eligible grid supply solar installations in combination with energy storage. The approved Pennoni project on Delsea Drive in New Sharon is similar to the types that would use this program.

Municipal Land Use Law Amendments – various amendments to the Master Plan components, which are found in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28 starting in 2017. The most significant change is with a 2021 amendment where the law was amended requiring municipalities to incorporate a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment into any Master Plan Land Use Element. The amendments specifically require municipalities to:

1. Analyze current and future threats to, and vulnerabilities of, the municipality associated with climate change-related natural hazards;
2. Include a build-out analysis of future residential, commercial, industrial, and other development in the municipality, and an assessment of the threats and vulnerabilities identified above related to that development;

3. Identify critical facilities, utilities, roadways, and other infrastructure that is necessary for evacuation purposes and sustaining quality of life during a natural disaster, to be maintained at all times in an operational state;
4. Analyze the potential impact of natural hazards on relevant components and elements of the master plan;
5. Provide strategies and design standards that may be implemented to reduce or avoid risks associated with natural hazards;
6. Include a specific policy statement on the consistency, coordination, and integration of the climate-change related hazard vulnerability assessment with certain other plans adopted by the municipality; and
7. Rely on the most recent natural hazard projections and best available science provided by the NJDEP.

Municipal efforts will be aided by the release of a number of documents produced by the state, including: the [New Jersey Energy Master Plan](#), the [Scientific Report on Climate Change](#), the [Global Warming Response Act 80 x 50](#), and the [Climate Change Resiliency Strategy](#), as was referenced above.

Decriminalization of Marijuana and Cultivation, Manufacturing and Sale of Cannabis – one of the larger societal trends in the United States has been the decriminalization of possession and use of marijuana at the state level by individuals. In turn, allowing for the limited use first of *cannabis sativa* or *indica* for medical purposes (particularly for chronic pain and nausea) and then for recreational psychoactive purposes. New Jersey added to this trend following a voter referendum in November 2020 that passed a constitutional amendment to legalize its possession and sale for recreational use. Legislation was then passed implementing the constitutional amendment in late February 2021. Administrative rules establishing the process and licensing of facilities were not issued until April 2022. New Jersey was the 14th state to legalize recreational cannabis. It remains, however, a Schedule I narcotic at the federal level with the potential to subject people to severe penalties for engaging in any of the allowed business operations and the possession of the substance.

The legislation required municipalities to opt out of all 6 classes of licenses if they did not want any cannabis business within their borders within 180 days of the effective date of the legislation. They are not allowed, however, to prevent cannabis from being delivered to their residents by delivery services (which requires a Class 6 license). Most municipalities opted out to see what the effects might be for the early adopters. Deptford opted in for cannabis retailing, which is a Class 5 license, in a limited geographic area and had one of the earliest retail shops that opened in October 2021 first as a medical cannabis dispensary and then for recreational sales in the Locust Grove Plaza cater-corner from the Deptford Mall.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Since the 2017 Master Plan, the inadequacies of the existing Department of Public Works Facility on Rt. 41 have become more apparent. These inadequacies were documented in the Preliminary Investigation of an Area in Need of Redevelopment report, dated October 5, 2022 and adopted by the Planning Board. In particular, as the population of the Township grows and increased coordination between emergency management and public works becomes necessary to address increased extreme weather events, it is important that the department have a modern facility to provide efficient and fiscally responsible services to the residents and businesses of Deptford. Since this cannot be achieved at its present location, a new site is required.

Most Holy Redeemer/Holy Angels Church, located on Delsea Drive in the Westville Grove section of Deptford and contained a church, school, rectory, and an additional building on approximately 8 acres fully closed in 2017. The Township acquired the property in April 2019 for cultural and recreational purposes because it has an indoor gymnasium and the sanctuary of the church could be converted into a stage for performances. The Township has also moved some EMS ambulance services to one of the buildings on the site, which has freed up the garage at the municipal building for other uses. The complex is now called the Deptford Township Community Center.

Around the time that the 2017 Master Plan was adopted, the South Jersey Museum of American History, a non-profit organization, relocated from Glassboro to 138 Andaloro Way, across the street from the Andaloro Park community gardens. Renamed the Museum of American History, it has a focus on South Jersey history and is open four days a week for a modest fee.

Deptford, as a farming community before the advent of the limited access highway system, has few historic resources. Much of the built environment was modest in scale with small landholdings. With the suburban development rush following World War II and particularly with the opening of the Walt Whitman Bridge between South Philadelphia and Camden/Gloucester City in 1957, little attention was paid to the preservation of buildings located on developable land. They were simply bulldozed for new houses and stores. Interestingly, though, Deptford makes a claim to the early history of the republic by being the landing site of the first balloon flight on January 10, 1793 by a French balloonist, Jean-Pierre Blanchard, who was also one of two people to first cross the English Channel. But this scarcity of artifacts from an earlier age point strongly towards the necessity for documenting Deptford's remaining resources and formulating a plan for preserving the remaining ones, which are principally individual survivors in scattered locations. At this date, there appears to be limited information which could be addressed as part of the Community Facility Element as opposed to establishing a full Historic Preservation Plan Element of the Master Plan.

SEWER SERVICE AREAS

Deptford is one of 24 municipalities that has petitioned the NJ Department of Environmental Protection for amendments to the County Water Quality Management Plan, which determines which areas may legally be served by public sewer. Procedure at NJDEP is that a plan amendment of this magnitude is first negotiated with the department who then determines whether the entity making the request can proceed to actually make a formal application. The Gloucester County Utilities Authority, which has jurisdiction over the WQMP, received this authorization and made application in September 2019. But to date, no approval has been forthcoming, which has implications for being able to fully implement the Township's affordable housing plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOALS, MASTER PLAN AND LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

The analysis preceding this section focused on the major changes to conditions, laws and economics that affect Deptford's Master Plan and land development regulations and provides the basis for the recommendations that follow.

MASTER PLAN

The issues and problems identified in this report may be characterized as necessitating mainly minor amendments of the Master Plan except for Circulation, Land Use with its attendant impacts from climate change, and the addition of a Utility Plan Element. Some specific areas to be addressed through revisions to the appropriate Master Plan element include:

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- The goals and objectives should be amended to support any revisions to the Master Plan and land development regulations recommended in this report.

CONSERVATION PLAN ELEMENT

- Revise the Conservation Plan Element as necessary to address the climate change and resiliency requirements now in the Municipal Land Use Law

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

- Update the Element to include new municipal facilities and any governmental or non-profit land acquisitions and known easements since the last Master Plan. Revise any descriptions to reflect current conditions.
- Consider any potential new acquisitions and map their location.
- Create a combined Recreational and Community Facilities Map suitable for web based viewing.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN ELEMENT

- Work proactively with the Board of Education in determining their need for school facilities and how best they might be addressed.
- The needs of the Deptford Township Library still remain after funding from the state bond referendum, which was oversubscribed by 300%, did not come to any South Jersey towns. Coordination with the Library Board over a new strategy for improvements is an area that could be explored.
- Update the Community Facilities Plan for the new public works facility on Cattell Road and the Deptford Community Center on Delsea Drive.
- Add historic resources information concerning the known sites in Deptford from secondary sources.

UTILITY PLAN ELEMENT

- The Master Plan has not previously had a Utility Plan Element. Traditionally, utility plan elements focused on public water and public sanitary sewer infrastructure. In Deptford, these public services have been supplied by the Deptford Township Municipal Utilities Authority (DTMUA) since 1960. An independent agency established by the governing body of the Township, the DTMUA is nonetheless involved in development review and coordination with the other parts of the municipal government. A Utility Plan Element would provide better coordination and aligned policies between public water and public sanitary sewer provisions as it relates to the Land Use Plan Element.
- Stormwater management, as New Jersey sees the effects of climate change in more intense storms more frequently, has become a critical infrastructure need. Though Section 35 of the Unified Development Ordinance was recently revised in 2021, NJDEP recently adopted new inland flooding rules that will need to be addressed in the municipality's regulations. Furthermore, NJDEP flood management rules and some stormwater management regulations permit more stringent control of stormwater by municipalities. Deptford has flat areas, borrow pit locations, clay lenses and other soil and topographic challenges that warrant an analysis of whether additional stormwater management controls are necessary to address these problems. A revised Section 35 of the UDO is recommended.
- In 2019, the State legislature passed the "Clean Stormwater and Flood Reduction Act" (P.L. 2019, Ch. 42) which was signed by the governor on March 18, 2019. It allows municipalities and counties, both individually and in regional associations to create stormwater utilities much like the DTMUA or Gloucester County Utilities Authority (GCUA) has for sanitary and potable water utilities. While the Township administration has reviewed the act previously, the new stormwater management rules enacted as administrative law by NJDEP may require a second look at the creation of such a utility in Deptford. One additional factor behind this concept is that municipalities are required to certify to NJDEP that the private stormwater management facilities in their boundaries meet specific standards or risk losing their required permit, which subjects local

governments to the risk of fines and other liabilities. However, the means to be able to remedy the problems that may be uncovered may well be beyond that of a homeowner's association or even the municipality itself without a new, broad-based revenue source, which a stormwater utility could provide through a dedicated, small annual fee.

CIRCULATION PLAN ELEMENT

- Create a Bicycle Facilities Plan as a technical appendix to the Circulation Plan Element of the Master Plan. Funding for this project has been awarded through a grant from the Delaware Valley Planning Commission through their Transportation and Community Development Initiative program and is expected to be completed in 2024.
- Revise the Circulation Plan map as necessary to reflect updated information.

LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT

- Update the land use plan element to address the climate change and resiliency requirements now in the Municipal Land Use Law.
- Continue to monitor the health of the Township' retail base and look to expand uses that work in a retail environment but that are not typically found in shopping centers today, such as package delivery services. The reuse of ailing shopping centers for other uses should be examined and if warranted, redevelopment plans should be prepared for those becoming blighted.
- Continue to examine land use policy for medical uses because it is an area of rapid regulatory and technological change.
- An analysis of lot patterns in certain parts of the municipality such as North and East Woodbury, Westville Grove, Sunset Beach and Blackwood Terrace reveal many mismatches between the size of lots and the zoning districts applied to them. This land use analysis reveals the need to create a new district intermediate between the R-6 and R-10 districts which have minimum lot sizes of 6,000 and 10,000 sf., respectively. Furthermore, there are many instances where the pattern of lots in R-6 districts is actually larger, sometimes substantially so. This suggests that a more fine-grained approach to the zoning for these neighborhoods needs to be established to protect their existing character or conversely not penalize homeowners with excessive lot sizes which affect the ability to rebuild a house or add an addition.

UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

- The zoning map should be revised to address the following areas:
 - Limiting the location of hotels to Rt. 41 in close proximity to Rt. 42 access.
 - Limiting additional self-storage facilities in the municipality to the LI-3 district.
 - Rezoning the Carteret Avenue RM-2 district to R-40 because of the significant wetlands found on the site. Rezoning the other lots on the north side of Carteret Avenue near Delsea Drive to TC-1.

- Rezoning the north side of Harris Avenue to LI-1 to reflect the existing land uses.
- Review the BC-1 district on the east side of Rt. 41 north of Bluebell Lane because of a mismatch between use and lot sizes with existing conditions and Board approvals for a different or modified land development regulations in this area.
- Review the north side of County House Road between Rt. 41 and Washington Avenue because of persistent non-residential uses of the properties and the existing R-6 zoning district.
- Create a new R-8 zoning district.
- Revise the zoning map to address the findings concerning lotting patterns in older Deptford neighborhoods.
- Zoning text amendments and graphics should be considered for the following topics:
 - Revise the AR-2 district to allow for a larger building envelope because the demands of the over 55 years old market are dictating larger one-story homes and creating an unusual level of applications for variances.
 - Since the limited opening of recreational cannabis sales has worked well for the municipality, explore other retail locations in the municipality such as Routes 41 and 45 for other potential stores. In addition, should the governing body decide to expand licensing to cultivation (which would be a wholly indoor operation), manufacturing and/or distribution, review industrial districts for the potential for adding such facilities as conditional uses in controlled areas.
 - A new Open Space zoning district should be created to be applied to the lands on the Township's Green Acres Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) to distinguish these from other lands of Deptford, the County and State, as well as educational uses, both public and private.
 - The Institutional zoning district should be rewritten to bring it up to date with modern usage and standards.
 - The streets section of the UDO should be revised to address non-residential street design.
 - Create standards for bicycle lanes and trail paths following the adoption of the Bicycle Facilities Plan.
 - Add electric vehicle requirements to the parking standards.
 - Create standards for solar and wind use from the residential to industrial scale.
 - Examine the buffer requirements between industrial and residential land uses to determine if adequate mitigation of noise, light and air pollution are being addressed from the industrial development.
 - The construction of zoning ordinances is such that they are considered to allow only listed uses by general understanding. This can be made explicit to further understanding by the general public. The next step in that process, which is fairly common but not in the UDO, is to have a list of specifically prohibited uses. These are normally odorous, loud, polluting, vice-inducing, glare and/or vibration producing.

This kind of list serves as a short hand for unwanted uses that could be added to the UDO.

- o Continue to revise the process sections to align with existing practice.

INCORPORATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLANS INTO THE MASTER PLAN AND ORDINANCES

Since 2008, Township officials have embarked on designating a number of redevelopment areas in the municipality as the Township Council and Planning Board seek to take a more active stance in the development of Deptford. The advantages and tools of redevelopment under the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq. have become more obvious since the law was enacted in 1991, and it can assist in jumpstarting moribund or stagnant areas where private capital has decided the risks outweigh the rewards. In Table 5, Redevelopment Areas Adopted in Deptford Township, the various redevelopment areas are listed that have been established by the Township Council, after public hearing by the Planning Board on the merits of meeting the specific redevelopment criteria.

Table 5. Redevelopment Areas Designated in Deptford Township.

Redevelopment Area	Block / Lots	Acres
Big Timber Creek	Block 1.02, Lot 1	26.7
Clements Bridge Road I	Block 199; Lots 24, 24.01, and 24.02	30.5
Clements Bridge Road II	Block 1.04, Lot 8,	66.4
	Block 5; Lots 8, 12, and 21	22.7
	Block 5.26, Lot 63	2.2
Five Points North	Block 387.01; Lots 19, 23, 34, 36, 50, and 81	154.5
Five Points Center	Block 387.01; Lots 55, 57, 65, 66, 68, and 69	186.1
Five Points South	Block 387.01, Lot 70	198.0
	Block 417.01; Lots 3-13	
Deptford Center Road	Block 200.01; Lots 3, 4, 5, and 6	16.0
Rowan College of South Jersey	Block 417, pt. Lot 1	43.8
Library Road	Block 226, Lot 17	1.2
Deptford DPW	Block 387.01; Lots 51 and 52	6.8
Total Acres		753.9

In the redevelopment plans adopted and drafted to date, the use and bulk standards are contained in the plans themselves and supplant those in the UDO. Performance and design standards for the most part are referenced in the redevelopment plans back to the UDO to maintain uniformity throughout the municipality with the largest differences contained in the Five Points plans that are intended to achieve a certain aesthetic appearance. It is anticipated that this practice will continue. Following are descriptions and recommendations, if any, for the established redevelopment areas.

BIG TIMBER CREEK

A specific area to review for viability was the Big Timber Creek Redevelopment Area since redevelopment there was originally envisioned as mixed use and intended to address some of the Township's affordable housing obligation. However, as the years progressed and the reclamation site continued to be drained, capped and graded, it became more obvious that it would never support residential uses from any practical or regulatory standpoint. Moreover, the Township addressed its affordable housing obligations through other means.

More recently, the region's highway network is under improvement with the reconstruction of the I-76/I-295 and Rt. 42 interchange. Most of this work is in Bellmawr Borough and is intended to allow for continuous travel on I-295 without the necessity of traveling on I-76. The project started in late 2012 with tree clearing and is projected to be completed in 2028. In the meantime, a project in the same vicinity but that will have a much more direct benefit is what is called the "missing moves" ramps to allow for motorists to drive northbound on I-295 to southbound Rt. 42 (and eventually to the Atlantic City Expressway) and vice-versa. This should help alleviate traffic cutting through Woodbury and Deptford on County and municipal streets to reach these limited access highways. This project opened to traffic in late November 2023. NJDOT has also committed to a new "connector road" from Creek Road in Bellmawr to the existing on-ramp to Rt. 42 southbound.

The connector road would provide direct access to the Big Timber Creek Redevelopment Area, which is otherwise known as Block 1.02, Lot 1. The Township has been periodically working with the redeveloper, Big Timber Junction, LLC, and most recently the Planning Board approved a subdivision to allow for the downslope portions of the site to be Green Acres restricted. The intent is for the site to be developed for warehousing as well as for other warehouses to be build on the Bellmawr portion of their redevelopment area and with the improved access to the highway network and remoteness from residential uses is an ideal location for uses involving heavy truck use. This would be consistent with the industrial uses just to the north of the redevelopment area located in Bellmawr. The lot is presently zoned BC-4 when it was rezoned following the 2017 Master Plan and the proposed scenario at that time was for some type of retail development. The most suitable zoning district would be LI-3 but the intent would be for the redevelopment plan to set the use and bulk standards for the redevelopment area.

CLEMENTS BRIDGE ROAD I

The Clements Bridge Road I redevelopment area has not achieved the goals for which it designated since it was established in 2014. While the buildings and dumping that existed have been demolished and arrested, respectively, the singular redevelopment has been a convenience store with motor fuel pumps, which could have been developed without the designation. The master plan road connecting Cooper Street and Green Briar Court has not been constructed or even designed nearly 20 years after its original conception to improve traffic flow in the area. Recission of the area in need of redevelopment could be considered and one or more of the Business Commercial zoning districts applied to the remaining land in the tract.

CLEMENTS BRIDGE ROAD II

On the opposite side of the street, the Deptford Center Plaza owner has found tenants to fill most of the space in the shopping center which had significant vacancies for a long period of time. That cannot be said of the Deptford Crossing Center shopping center, located at Rt. 42 and Clements Bridge Road that continues with significant vacancies and a long list of property maintenance violations, tree cutting violations, illegal uses and sundry other land use issues over the past number of years. A draft redevelopment plan was prepared in November 2021, but has not yet advanced beyond that point. The area in need of redevelopment designation for the two shopping centers, and later an additional property next to the Deptford Center Plaza in 2018, is for non-condemnation only, so the ability to effectuate positive change would be limited to persuasion and reason, which has not proven effective thus far with the landowner. More effective use would require an eminent domain designation of the area in need of redevelopment.

FIVE POINTS REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

The Five Points Redevelopment Area was designated in 2007 and later readopted in 2008 to address objections raised by two of the landowners in the area. Not satisfied with the readoption revisions, the same two landowners also sued the municipality over the designation. Eventually in 2014, the Township came to terms with the two landowners and settled the litigation, which required the production of two redevelopment plans. Five Points North and Central dealt with lands related to the Kinsley Landfill and Five Points South dealt with lands owned by affiliates of the Benderson Development Corporation. The Five Points Redevelopment Area was the subject of a preliminary and final site plan approval, as well as a minor subdivision in September 2020.

With regard to the Five Points Central Redevelopment Area, it has been the subject of several approvals for grid-scale solar projects that have been constructed and are in operation on the former landfill.

Lastly, the Five Points South Redevelopment Area's Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 2014 and revised in 2019 when the Township sought additional locations for more inclusionary housing development. The Township and Benderson Development Corporation came to new terms on the redevelopment of Five Points South at that time. Since that time several developers have sought input from the municipality on the development of this portion of the redevelopment area but none have advanced to an application. Most recently, Benderson Development Corporation, LLC filed an application for development, but was determined not to meet the terms of the redevelopment plan. A revised application is expected in 2024.

No changes to the redevelopment plans are proposed at this time and no changes in the land use plan element are required.

DEPTFORD CENTER ROAD

The Deptford Center Road designation was intended to enable the relocation and modernization of the NJDOT maintenance facility located north of the Target shopping center, while also increasing the retail base of the municipality. Since this plan did not come to fruition, recission of the area in need of redevelopment is recommended. Application of the designation requires state acquiescence and since the maintenance facility is not relocating, the designation becomes a moot point. Consideration of rezoning this to an Institutional district should be made to distinguish it from the other BC-2 uses that surround it.

ROWAN COLLEGE OF SOUTH JERSEY

Originally Gloucester County Community College, then Rowan College of Gloucester County following a formal affiliation with Rowan University in Glassboro and then finally Rowan College of South Jersey following its merger with the Cumberland County Community College, this institution in south Deptford is a successful example of the evolution of the community college in the state. The redevelopment area was designated to aid the College in creating Public Private Partnerships to construct buildings and involve the private sector in providing students with hands on experience in business establishments on campus. The area in need of redevelopment was established in 2016 and the redevelopment plan in 2017 and subsequently amended in 2021. No changes are anticipated in the designation or redevelopment plan at this time and no changes in the land use plan element are required.

LIBRARY ROAD

A recent designation in 2022, the Library Road redevelopment area is surplus municipal property and contains an obsolete building that at one time was a church and housed the original public library. The Redevelopment Plan contemplates retail sales and services on the property given its existing non-residential character. This designation should be recognized on the land use plan.

DPW FACILITY

The DPW Facility on Delsea Drive is recognized as no longer meeting the needs of the municipality. Constrained by its small size, narrow but deep configuration, as well as past decisions on the layout of buildings and storage areas, the facility is obsolete. A new facility in a different location will allow a better, more efficient layout, as well as land to expand in the future, if needed. Once a new facility is designed, constructed and occupied, this property would also become surplus public property and could become a site for other industrial uses as outlined in the redevelopment plan adopted at the end of 2022. No revisions to the land use plan element are necessary for the existing site. When the Land Use Plan Element is revised as recommended by this document, the new facility will be designated.

PUBLIC ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The final component of the Reexamination Report concerns recommendations for the locations of development of public electric vehicle infrastructure in each municipality. This part of the municipality land use law was amended by P.L. 2019, Chapter 267, which was put in effect on November 6, 2019. As noted, Deptford had last adopted a Reexamination Report in January 2017 and was not required to review its master plan, land development regulations and other regulatory effects on its policies until 2027 so this state requirement had not yet become a necessary part of the review process. Subsequent to the 2019 law, however, the state legislature passed and Governor Murphy signed P.L. 2021, Chapter 171, often called the “Make-Ready” law, that effectively established electric vehicle charging requirements statewide. The law directed the NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to create a model ordinance that then applied to all municipal land development regulations, but also permits municipalities to craft their own local ordinance as long as the standards are reasonable and do not conflict with the intent of the statewide model ordinance. In this matter at least, the state realized that “one size fits all” was not the right approach. DCA published their model ordinance on September 21, 2021.

Deptford’s policy with regard to electric vehicle charging stations was that it was just another type of parking space, just as a barrier free stall was just another type of parking space and did not consider it a separate accessory use or structure category. If electrical sub-station, transformers are other type of equipment was required to be sited, they were treated as an accessory use customarily incidental to a principal or accessory use and usually required a minor site plan just to insure that the location did not create circulation problems. Specific applications were approved for branded charging stations by Tesla Motors in 2018 and Electrify America in 2020 at the Deptford Mall. Both are operational. Deptford’s policy effectively allows for this use in any commercial location. The Wawa convenience store chain is beginning to install such stations as well, but has not yet done so at any of its three locations in the Township.

The state’s establishment in the Make-Ready law of Electric Vehicle Supply/Service Equipment (EVSE) and Make-Ready parking spaces – meaning the electrical cabling for charging is put in place – creates the policy for how electric vehicle charging will occur in the future and Deptford’s policy allows for the retrofitting of existing commercial development with charging stations. Best practice would be to make the Township’s policy more explicit in the UDO in any future amendment to the parking regulations occurs or if it is decided to incorporate the DCA model ordinance into the land development regulations.