

GOLDEN CIRCLE
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Cherry Hill Township
Department of Community Development
820 Mercer Street
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034

GOLDEN CIRCLE
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

CHERRY HILL TOWNSHIP

COUNTY OF CAMDEN

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Department of Community Development

Cherry Hill Township
820 Mercer Street
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

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I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the NJ Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A, the Township Council of Cherry Hill Township adopted a resolution on February 23, 1998 authorizing the Planning Board of Cherry Hill Township to conduct a preliminary investigation and hearing and make a recommendation as to whether an area on Route 70 (the site of the former Rickshaw Inn/Garden Park Hotel) is in need of redevelopment. The Planning Board conducted a public hearing on March 16, 1998 and adopted a resolution declaring that Block 31.01 Lots 1, 8, & 9 and Block 40.01 Lots 1 & 6 (formerly known as the Rickshaw Inn/Garden Park Hotel) are in need of redevelopment.

The Cherry Hill Township Council, by Resolution 98-3-26, adopted the preliminary report from the Cherry Hill Township Planning Board, which determined that the referenced blocks and lots shall be a redevelopment zone. Based on the above, the Planning Board, by virtue of this Resolution, is directed to prepare a redevelopment plan.

The purpose of the redevelopment plan for Golden Circle/Rickshaw/Garden Park Hotel is to acknowledge the existence of deteriorated conditions which are detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the public and viability of this area and to support and encourage the redevelopment of this land. Further, this plan is intended to provide a

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mechanism for the orderly planning and redevelopment of the Project Area consistent with municipal objectives, public policy goals and the best interest of the community and neighborhood.

Upon its adoption by the Governing Body, this Redevelopment Plan shall satisfy all statutory requirements and constitute the legal prerequisite for the redevelopment of the project area.

II. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

New Jersey Redevelopment and Housing Law N.J.S.A.40A:12A-5 states the following specific requirements for a redevelopment plan:

N.J.S.A. 40a:12A-7.

- a. No redevelopment project shall be undertaken or carried out except in accordance with a redevelopment plan adopted by ordinance of the municipal governing body, upon its finding that the specifically delineated project area is located in an area in need of redevelopment or in an area of need or rehabilitation, or in both, according to criteria set forth in section 5 or section 14 or P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:1 22A-5 or 40A: 1 2A-1 4), as appropriate.

The redevelopment plan shall include an outline for the planning, development,

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redevelopment or rehabilitation of the project area sufficient to indicate:

- (1) Its relationship to definite local objectives as to appropriate land uses, density of population, improved traffic and public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities and other public improvements.
 - (2) Proposed land uses and building requirements in the project area.
 - (3) Adequate provision for the temporary and permanent relocation, as necessary, of residents in the project area, including an estimate of the extent to which decent, safe and sanitary dwelling units affordable to displaced residents will be available to them in the existing local housing market.
 - (4) An identification of any property within the redevelopment area which is proposed to be acquired in accordance with the redevelopment plan.
 - (5) Any significant relationship of the redevelopment plan to:
 - (a) the master plans of contiguous municipalities,
 - (b) the master plan of the county in which the municipality is located; and
 - (c) the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, adopted pursuant to the 'State Planning Act', P.L.1985, c. 398 (C.52:18A-196 et seq.).
- b. A redevelopment plan may include the provision of affordable housing in accordance with the 'Fair Housing Act', P.L.1985, c. 222 (C.52:27D-301 et seq.) and the housing element of the municipal master plan.

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- c. The redevelopment plan shall describe its relationship to pertinent municipal development regulations as defined in the "Municipal Land Use Law", P.L.1975, c. 291 (C.40:55D-1 et seq.). The redevelopment plan shall supersede applicable provisions of the development regulations of the municipality or constitute an overlay zoning district within the redevelopment area. When the redevelopment plan supersedes any provision of the development regulations, the ordinance adopting the redevelopment plan shall contain an explicit amendment to the zoning district map included in the zoning ordinance. The zoning district map as amended shall indicate the redevelopment area to which the redevelopment plan applies. Notwithstanding the provisions of the 'Municipal Land Use Law' P.L.1975, c. 291 (C.40:55D-1 et seq.) or of other law, no notice beyond that required for adoption of ordinances by the municipality shall be required for the hearing on or adoption of the redevelopment plan or subsequent amendments thereof.
- d. All provisions of the redevelopment plan shall be either substantially consistent with the municipal master plan or designed to effectuate the master plan. The municipal governing body may adopt a redevelopment plan which is inconsistent with or not designed to effectuate the master plan by affirmative vote of a majority of its full authorized membership with the reasons for so acting set forth in the redevelopment plan.

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- e. Prior to the adoption of a redevelopment plan, or revision or amendment thereto, the planning board shall transmit to the governing body, within 45 days after referral, and a report containing its recommendation concerning the redevelopment plan. This report shall include an identification of any provisions in the proposed redevelopment plan which are inconsistent with the master plan and recommendations concerning these inconsistencies and any other matters as the board deems appropriate. The governing body, when considering the adoption of a redevelopment plan or revision or amendment thereof, shall review the report of the planning board and may approve or disapprove or change any recommendation by a vote of a majority of its full authorized membership and shall record in its minutes the reasons for not following the recommendations. Failure of the planning board to transmit its report within the required 45 days shall relieve the governing body from the requirements of this subsection with regard to the pertinent proposed redevelopment plan or revision or amendment thereof. Nothing in this subsection shall diminish the applicability of the provisions of subsection d. of this section which respect to any redevelopment plan or revision or amendment thereof.
- f. The governing body of a municipality may direct the planning board to prepare a redevelopment plan for a designated redevelopment area. After completing the redevelopment plan, the planning board shall transmit the proposed plan to the governing

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body for its adoption. The governing body, when considering the proposed plan, may amend or revise any portion of the proposed redevelopment plan by an affirmative vote of the majority of its full authorized membership and shall record in its minutes the reasons for each amendment or revision. When a redevelopment plan or amendment to a redevelopment plan is referred to the governing body by the planning board under this subsection, the governing body shall be relieved of the referral requirements of subsection e. of this section. L. 1992, c.7987. II.

III. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Golden Circle Redevelopment Area is located in Cherry Hill Township, on Route 70 between Beideman and Penn Avenues. The Location Plan (Exhibit 1: EX1) clearly delineates the area of concern. Property included in the area, by Block and Lot are:

Block 40.01, Lots 1 and 6

Block 31.01, Lots 1, 8 and 9.

The total size of the site is approximately 3.5 acres.

IV. BASIS AND GOALS OF REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

The basis of creating the redevelopment district was in accordance with the conditions found at the site and as found in the Determination of Need Study, prepared by Cherry

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Hill Township, Department of Community Development, dated 3/16/98. The condition of the site and building were found to be deplorable, as evidenced by the substandard, dilapidated and deteriorated conditions. The existing building structure was unsafe due to broken and shattered glass. As a result, the Township's Property Maintenance Division required all existing windows to be removed. Because of the longstanding vacancy of the building, there has been significant vandalism. To keep vagrants out, the property had to be secured with a chain link fence along the perimeter of the site.

The goal of the redevelopment plan is to set forth a viable, realistic plan for the elimination, repair or replacement of the existing deteriorated property and support and encourage the redevelopment of this area. The plan shall promote the economic, social and environmental viability of the area and promote the best use of the land while not impinging on the existing vibrancy of the neighborhood and surrounding community.

Public policy goals include the promoting uses consistent with the surrounding areas.

V. REDEVELOPMENT PLAN/PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT ACTION

The plan for the redevelopment of the project area includes:

-Determine the best use for the existing site.

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- Determine if the land use provided for in the Master Plan is appropriate for the site.
- Acquire the property from the current owner.
- Eliminate unhealthy, unsafe and unsightly conditions at the property.
- Secure a redeveloper and other professionals to design the site plan and building plans (if necessary) to attract the best user to the site for redevelopment.
- Insure that the redevelopment plan is as flexible as possible, in order to foster quality development while maintaining consistency with the goals and objectives.

This document constitutes a Redevelopment Plan, under the provisions of the applicable State statutes.

VI. STATUTORY COMPLIANCE:

- a. (1) The relationship of the redevelopment plan to the local objectives with regard to land use, density of population, traffic/public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities.

The Master Plan for Cherry Hill Township was first created in 1966, and revised in 1973. In 1984, it was again revised, responding to large scale development of the 1960's, 70's and 80's. In 1990 and 1996, the Township undertook reexaminations of the

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master plan. These re-examination reports set forth major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality, the extent to which such problems had been reduced or increased since the last master plan, and if there had been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives which previously formed the basis of the master plan.

The re-examination reports were clear that prior conditions which were the focus of past planning objectives were outdated. Cherry Hill in the 1990's experienced stable population and had become nearly fully developed. Recommendations of the reports included the fact that future master plans must look ahead and address different sets of situations, such as the development of small by-passed parcels, negative impacts of traffic on adjacent land uses and the need to revise and redevelop existing structures and land use in selected areas.

The 1996 re-examination report states the B-4 Zone on Route 70, west of the Race Track, is confusing and difficult to interpret. Further, the improvements made to Route 70 by the New Jersey State Department of Transportation created anomalies in the zoning and lot lines, rendering some sites out of compliance with the required setbacks and site acreage.

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The redevelopment site is zoned B-4. It is the primary purpose of this zone to provide an area for business uses that serve the Southern New Jersey region. A function of this zone is to complement and supplement the existing business uses in the area. The uses should work together toward the goal of establishing a regional business district within Cherry Hill. It is the purpose of this zone to encourage comprehensive planning and development of large areas.

Uses permitted within the "B-4" zone include residential, retail, office, restaurants, banks, hotels, movie theaters, recreational facilities, transit/transportation facilities, race tracks and convention centers. According to the provisions of the zone, a site the size of the redevelopment zone (approximately 3.5 acres) would only permit office, restaurant or bank uses. The prior use of the site as a hotel facility is a permitted use, however, its placement on the site does not meet any site requirements. The facility was permitted as a "non-conforming use", having existed previous to the institution of the zoning and land use ordinances.

Uses which are determined to be appropriate to the site include senior housing, assisted living facility, hotel and specialized medical care facility. Adjacent land use in the area include residential (trailer park, multi-family townhomes/condos and single family), office, industrial and business or commercial uses including the Race Track, hotel and

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retail strip center.

In general, the non residential uses in the area are located along the State Highway, Route 70. The roadway network within this area includes the jughandle for Route 70 westbound (U-Turn) and Haddonfield Road southbound, via Penn Avenue and Grove Street. These arteries were upgraded by the State DOT in 1992 as part of the elimination of the "Race Track Circle" and are suitable for handling sufficient traffic around the site, particularly, from Philadelphia, Camden and neighboring communities west. They do not, however, provide good access to the site from the eastern domain of the Township, which would necessitate the use of the Route 70, westbound, jughandle of Fulton Avenue to Warren Avenue, to Haddonfield Road, to Grove Street to Penn Avenue.

The area roadway network is not an orderly grid pattern, with several access points. Many of the existing rights-of-way have been vacated over time and/or were never upgraded to standard. There are only two north-south roads which provide direct access between Route 70 and Grove Street: these are Penn Avenue and S. Washington. S. Washington has grown to be the heart of the residential community and provides a stable, single family environment. It is not suitable as a "north/south" throughway for traffic to the site.

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The development of an assisted living facility, hotel, specialized medical care facility or office would be in keeping with the other land uses immediately adjacent to the site as well as the existing transportation facilities, traffic patterns for such use and impact to the neighborhood. These uses have little, if any, spill over into the adjacent areas, and would both be supported by the neighborhood and positively contribute to it.

Each of these uses would draw from the local neighborhoods or neighboring communities for their occupants. In the case of an assisted living facility, such draw is often from the nearby long time residents who need increased care but chose to stay in the neighborhood. Similarly, a specialized medical facility would provide necessary care for both local and regional patients. Due to the fact that such facilities are not "emergency in nature", access to the site from the east is not time critical. The continuation of the site as a hotel would have adequate draw from nearby Philadelphia and surrounding communities. The prominence of "long term or extended stay hotels" or office use would draw from regions west, north and south of this area and would provide little impact to the adjoining neighborhoods. (See Exhibit 1, EX1:Location Plan and Exhibit 2, EX2: Zoning Map)

- a. (2) Proposed land uses and building requirements in the project area.

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As noted above, proposed land uses within the redevelopment area include an assisted living facility, hotel, specialized medical care Facility and/or office complex. Building requirements for the site will be a function of whether or not the existing building remains or is razed and new structures are built.

In the case of the former, there must be close evaluation of the existing structure, and its ability to meet proper construction building code standards. Further, construction improvements must include upgrades which bring the building into compliance with national standards for Americans with disabilities. It is impossible for the existing building to meet any acceptable setback, in its current location and stature.

This report recommends the demolition of the existing structure. This will pave the way for the creation of a completely new and comprehensive site plan for the redevelopment area. A newly designed building and site plan can insure proper placement, building size and height, setbacks from any public right-of-way and abutting residential property, open space, landscaping, pedestrian and transportation access and proper parking and signage.

- a. (3) Adequate provision for the relocation of residents in the project area.

There is no known or anticipated relocation of residents in the project area.

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

This plan recommends the acquisition of the parcels identified as the "redevelopment property", noted as Block 31.01 Lots 1, 8, & 9 and Block 40.01 lots 1 & 6 (formerly known as the Rickshaw Inn/Garden Park Hotel).

a. (5) Any significant relationship of the redevelopment plan to the master plans of contiguous municipalities, the County Master Plan and the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

The Golden Circle Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the Master Plans of contiguous municipalities in several ways. Adjoining and fully developed municipalities to the west, such as Collingswood, Haddonfield, Merchantville and Pennsauken, share with Cherry Hill the goal of continuing revitalization and renewal. Such policies improve the livability and sustainability of the entire community. The newer developing municipalities to the east, such as Evesham and Voorhees see a thriving Route 70 in Cherry Hill as the catalyst for future development within their own boundaries.

The Route 70 corridor, as it traverses Pennsauken, Cherry Hill and Evesham serves a

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dual purpose. One of many gateways to South Jersey from the west, Route 70 is a cross-section of what South Jersey has to offer. It is vitally important to this region to maintain a prosperous image along this highway. Route 70 is also a gateway to each municipality that it crosses. Redevelopment is already taking place in Pennsauken, while new development continues in Evesham. The Golden Circle Redevelopment Plan further bolsters the current development and redevelopment of the Route 70 corridor and insures that the gateway image is preserved.

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan embodies a number of goals and strategies meant to conserve natural resources, revitalize urban centers, protect the quality of the environment and provide needed housing and adequate public services at a reasonable cost while promoting beneficial economic growth, development and renewal.

The Golden Circle Redevelopment Plan unquestionably addresses several of these goals and strategies. The State Plan incorporates a series of 19 categories which contain policies that encourage consistent and comprehensive planning throughout the state. These policies are directed toward achieving the initial goals and strategies aforementioned. The Golden Circle Redevelopment Plan corresponds directly with 4 of the categories detailed by the State Plan:

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Public Investment Priorities

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan addresses public investment priorities. The quality of life and prosperous growth within municipal boundaries should be sustained by precise public investments. It is in this way that the location, pattern and pace of growth can be regulated. The State Plan specifically references economic development projects as high priority for the use of public funding. The Golden Circle Redevelopment Plan is exactly the type of project the State Plan advocates as a wise investment of public dollars.

Economic Development

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan emphasizes that economic development should be an integral part of governmental responsibility at all levels. It suggests that economic targeting should be administered by municipalities to identify those areas with the greatest potential for growth and public benefit. The Golden Circle Redevelopment Plan is certainly an economic redevelopment target that promotes urban revitalization. The State Plan also suggests that existing economic bases be modernized to promote future development and economic viability. The Golden Circle Redevelopment Plan has the potential to rejuvenate that portion of the Route 70 corridor and foster other new economic development projects in the surrounding area.

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Urban Revitalization

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan stresses the importance of urban revitalization efforts. The Golden Circle Redevelopment Plan incorporates the industrial and commercial adaptive reuse policy which encourages the adaptive reuse of obsolete commercial facilities. The State Plan also has a policy which encourages public procurement practices such as those employed with the Golden Circle Redevelopment Plan. Combined, these practices continue to bolster revitalization efforts.

Housing

Should the Golden Circle Redevelopment Plan be successful in obtaining an assisted living facility for this site it will facilitate the age-restricted housing policy addressed in the State Plan. The Redevelopment Plan allows the potential for age restricted housing to be integrated into the larger community as preferred by the State Plan.

b. Provision of Affordable Housing in accordance with the "FAIR HOUSING ACT" and the housing element of the Master Plan:

Cherry Hill Township's plan for affordable housing, is in accordance with the Stipulation of Settlement, which established Cherry Hill's fair share obligation on 3/12/93. The fair share number is 706 units, plus, 52 "post-credited indigenous need units (TOTAL 758).

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Of these units, 79 Senior housing are referenced to be provided at St. Mary's/Rickshaw or other acceptable locations. This number is already satisfied at the St. Mary's facility and other senior housing facilities such as the Dubin House. Therefore, Cherry Hill Township can meet its affordable housing obligation without assigning a specific number of units at this location.

c. Redevelopment plan's relationship to municipal development regulations as defined in the Municipal Land Use Law:

The redevelopment plan complies with development regulations as defined in the Municipal Land Use Law. The redevelopment plan proposed for the site will require Planning Board submission, review and approval. It is recommended that special attention be paid to building set-backs, site plan requirements and bulk characteristics. This will insure that the new structure and site plan will meet acceptable Township design standards. Characteristics which are imperative include landscaping, open space, pedestrian and vehicle circulation (both to and through the site), drainage, parking, recreation (if appropriate) and aesthetic distinction.

d. Redevelopment plan's relationship to municipal master plan:

The Municipal Master Plan, according to the 1996 re-examination report indicates that

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the current B-4 zoning is confusing and difficult to interpret. The Township's master plan, as it relates to this zoning, should be reevaluated and brought into compliance with current objectives and goals of this area. The redeveloper shall agree to comply with the conditions and requirements of the Township Planning Board and goals and objectives of this redevelopment plan.

VII. REDEVELOPMENT ENTITY AND/OR REDEVELOPER

If necessary for the implementation of this plan, the governing body of the Township of Cherry Hill may designate a redevelopment entity to implement redevelopment plans and carry out the redevelopment project in the area designated by this plan (C.40A:I 2A-4). When necessary for the implementation of this plan, the Township or redevelopment entity may enter into a contract with a redeveloper for any construction or other work forming a part of this redevelopment plan (N.J.S.A. 40A:I 2A-4 (c)).

VIII. TIME LIMITS

The redeveloper of this project shall be required to begin and complete the development of the land for the uses specified in this plan and the construction of improvements within a reasonable time period.

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This redevelopment plan, as it may be amended from time to time, shall be in effect for a period of 20 years from the date of adoption by the Governing Body of the Township of Cherry Hill.

IX. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The definitions provided in N.J.S.A. 40A:I 2A3 are incorporated into this plan by reference.

No covenant or other instrument shall be executed whereby land or structures within this redevelopment area is restricted upon the basis of race, creed, color, gender, marital status, age, handicap, familial status or national origin.

X. PROCEDURES FOR AMENDING THE APPROVED REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

This plan may be amended from time to time upon compliance with the requirements of law, and the approval of the Governing body of the Township.

XI. REPEAL AND SEVERABILITY STATEMENTS

All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this redevelopment plan are repealed to the extent of such inconsistency only. If any provision or regulation of this redevelopment plan should be judged invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such order or plan shall not affect the remaining portions of this plan which shall remain in full force and effect.

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XI. SUMMARY

In sum, this report strongly urges the demolition of the existing building. The structure, as it stands is not an appropriate building for this Township, its location at the "Gateway to Cherry Hill" or to the site. The building is in total disrepair and is not an asset to the parcel or the future development of the land.