3.3 Existing Land Use and Zoning Regulations

3.3.1 Land Use

Windshield surveys and site investigations reveal the land area in the revitalization area is comprised of mostly detached residential units, institutional uses\textsuperscript{15}, and Township owned land. Table 2 and Map 4, indicates the distribution of existing land uses in the study area.

### Types of Land Uses Found in Browns Mills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAND USE</th>
<th>ACRES</th>
<th>% OF LAND AREA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SINGLE FAMILY</td>
<td>64.35</td>
<td>20.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMERCIAL</td>
<td>62.01</td>
<td>20.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOBILE HOME</td>
<td>49.19</td>
<td>15.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOSPITAL</td>
<td>44.25</td>
<td>14.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROW</td>
<td>23.72</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOWNSHIP OWNED LAND</td>
<td>17.68</td>
<td>5.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIVATE VACANT LAND</td>
<td>16.11</td>
<td>5.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH</td>
<td>10.07</td>
<td>3.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY FACILITY</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>2.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROFESSIONAL OFFICE</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTEL</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>0.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APARTMENTS</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VACANT BUILDING</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUNICIPAL PARKING</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARKS AND RECREATION</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRIPLEX</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTILITY</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUPLEX</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>308.25</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Windshield surveys, Pemberton Township Tax Assessor records, Burlington County tax records, interviews with stakeholders and GIS data received from Burlington County Department of Information Technology as well as NJDEP.

\textsuperscript{15} Institutional uses include hospitals, schools, and churches. These are non taxable entities that are usually considered inherently beneficial land uses in regards to the MLUL.
The Existing Land Use Table and Existing Land Use Map indicate that the distribution of land uses in Downtown Browns Mills is unbalanced. A successful town center has a mixture of commercial, retail, residential, open space, and institutional land uses to support the needs and requirements of the residents and business owners during the day and evening hours. The existing land uses in the TC zone do not encourage mixed-use, which are essential when developing a pedestrian oriented-environment. The current code encourages the separation of land uses, focuses on parking standards and fails to look at building form and its relationship to the street. The Revitalization Plan recommends that permitted land uses in the TC zone be revised to include mixed land uses with a residential component. The first floor of a two story building should be reserved for retail and commercial users with professional office being a second option. No residential use should be permitted on the first floor for any building located on Juliustown Road, Pemberton Browns Mills Road and Trenton Road. Residential and professional office is recommended on the second and third floor.

Another problem with the existing land use pattern in the downtown area is the quantity of non taxable businesses within the Revitalization Area. Pemberton is fortunate to have Deborah Heart and Lung Center, Burlington County Community College, and Brendan T. Byrne State Park within its boundaries. Downtown Browns Mills is home to the Senior Center, Browns Mill Volunteer Fire Company, numerous houses of worship, Veterans’ Memorial and school facilities all of which contribute to the fabric of the downtown area. While these institutional and open space land uses are community assets, they occupy large tracts of land which preclude the Township from generating any ratable dollars since they are nonprofit entities. Specifically in the downtown area, non-taxable entities\(^\text{16}\) occupy almost 27 percent of the land area. To preserve space for tax ratable generating businesses in the downtown area, future non-taxable entities should be discouraged from occupying high value property locations and the first floor in commercial/retail buildings in the downtown area and turning them into non-taxable commercial space. High value property locations include intersections such as Pemberton Browns Mill Road and Juliustown Road, Trenton Road and Pemberton Browns Mills Road, Trenton Road and Lakehurst Road. In addition to these intersections, non-taxable land uses should be discouraged from occupying any commercial space that fronts Juliustown Road, Pemberton Browns Mills Road, Lakehurst Road and Trenton Road in the downtown area. Non taxable land uses diminish the “critical mass” of retail and service uses essential to the economic

\(^{16}\text{Non-taxable entities include hospital, churches, Township owned land, schools, community facilities, civic and parks and recreation areas. The calculation does not include roads and ROWS because they are necessary infrastructure improvements that are required to bring ratable dollars into a downtown area.}
vitality of the downtown area and erodes the community’s tax base.

3.3.2 Zoning
The prominent zoning district within the Revitalization Study area is Town Center (TC). The TC zone was created to provide opportunities for commercial development, diverse retail, and service centers in the Browns Mills Town Center. The entire TC is within the Township’s designated redevelopment area and serves as the zoning and design guidelines for the properties located within the redevelopment area. Within the TC zone, there is an area zoned High Density Residential (R-80). The overlay zone was created when the Township adopted its Redevelopment Plan in 1995 for this area. The purpose of this overlay zone was to allow existing single family homeowners to continue to use their property without having to conform to the zoning standards in the TC zone. To the east of the TC zone, there are single family homes that are zoned Office Professional (OP). Deborah Heart and Lung Center is zoned Hospital (H). North of Pemberton Browns Mills Road there are three residential districts: Mobile Home (MH), Single Family R-1, and Single Family R-3. Map 5 indicates the existing zoning in the study area.

The Browns Mills Volunteer Fire Company and Browns Mills Emergency Squad buildings are institutional land uses within the downtown area that take away from the Township’s ability to build a critical mass in the downtown area and generate ratables.

17 Pemberton Township Land Development Code Book, Section 190-23.
The intent of the TC zone has not been realized due to the quantity of undersized parcels, regional perception of Browns Mills, environmental constraints and existing market conditions. Additionally, the TC zoning requirements and design guidelines have become outdated, inconsistent with new local land use policies, and neglect to incorporate Smart Growth planning policies. For these reasons, the following zoning boundaries amendments and TC amendments are recommended to effectuate both the revitalization plan and redevelopment plan:

1. To comply with the military’s recommendation of 3.2 acres for a single family house in an Accident Potential Zone II (APZ II) and to encourage commercial development on minor arterial county road, it is recommended that a portion of the R-3 zone on the north side of Pemberton Browns Mills Road, be rezoned to TC. Specifically, Block 777, Lots 1-53, all of Block 776.01, and all of Block 776.02. Additionally, the first 300 feet of Mobile Home (MH) District fronting Pemberton Browns Mills Road should be rezoned to TC. Rezoning the R-3 and a portion of MH to TC has two benefits to the Township. First, the rezoning complies with military’s recommendations for land uses within the APZ II, which will help protect the health, safety and well-being of homeowners from an aircraft incident. Secondly, it will provide the Township with additional land to develop commercial properties along Pemberton Browns Mills Road.

2. The Office Professional (OP) zone has become outdated. The original intent of the OP zone was to provide a transition between a major commercial development and the R-200 single family zone. Field surveys and tax records indicated that there are no professional offices existing in this zone. Trenton Road is filled with low intense land uses such as a church, school and real estate office. It is recommended that the OP zone be eliminated and rezoned to R-200 which is more consistent with the adjacent land uses and zoning districts. It is recommended that St. Ann’s parking lot be rezoned from OP to TC to be consistent with its primary use, which is the church, as well as to provide opportunities for shared parking agreements with downtown businesses.

3. The area on the south side of Mirror Lake on Lakehurst Road is zoned General Commercial Light Industrial (GCLI), Medium Residential (R-3) and (High Residential (R-80). This area was not originally included in the scope of the TCDI grant due to its location south of Mirror Lake. However, as the visioning process proceeded, the Steering Committee noted that the vacant warehouse and Reflection Park should be part of the Browns Mills Town Center. In addition, this area was recently included in the Township’s Browns Mills Town Center Redevelopment Area. The GCLI zone permits light industrial and auto-oriented land uses that conflict with the pedestrian-oriented vision for Browns Mills, the adjacent residential districts, and Mirror Lake Recreation Area. There are vacant warehouses and commercial buildings across from Mirror Lake that are zoned GCLI, R-80 and R-3 that would be an ideal location for a village shopping center, family restaurant, or a similar type of
land use found on a successful main street. To facilitate more pedestrian activity around the lake and encourage commercial redevelopment on Lakehurst Road that is consistent with the character of the residential community area, it is recommended that these areas be rezoned from GCLI, R-3 and R-80 to TC.

4. There are approximately 18 detached single family homes along Ashton Street, Fairfield Street, and Berkshire Street. The Browns Mills Town Center Redevelopment Plan made the base zoning for these residential homes TC and created an R-80 overlay district to allow the existing residential homes to be utilized as conforming uses and not classified as pre-existing non-conforming uses. It allows the single family homeowners to use R-80 bulk standards when making any site improvements without going to the zoning board for a variance. The Township’s official zoning map should indicated the R-80 is an overlay zone, not the base zone.

Dilapidated building at the intersection of South Lakeshore Drive and Lakehurst Road provides an opportunity for redevelopment.

Vacant warehouse (Williams Paving) at the intersection of Juliustown Road and Rancocas Lane should be developed into a commercial shopping village.

5. Additional zoning requirements, streetscape designs, and architectural standards for the TC are recommended in the Design Guidelines, Section 4.0, of this report.

Map 6 indicates the proposed zoning changes for the revitalization plan.
3.4 Property Ownership
A review of Burlington County and Pemberton Township’s Tax Assessor records indicate that approximately 78 percent of the land within the study area is privately owned and the Township owns the remaining 22 percent. The Township’s portion of land area is mostly vacant parcels located between Dearborn Avenue and Noteboom Avenue, which this Revitalization Plan recommends developing into residential units with the option for professional live-work offices. The tax records indicate that the majority of businesses that own land within the study area do not reside in Pemberton Township or in nearby communities. The lack of property ownership by Township residents indicates that many landowners are not familiar with the current economic conditions in Browns Mills and the needs of the community. The Township should continue to reach out to landowners and communicate to them the Township’s vision for the downtown area and still hold them accountable for the maintenance and condition of their lands and buildings.

3.5 Regional Perception
There is a regional perception that Downtown Browns Mills is unsafe due to gangs, drugs, and the amount of transients that loiter around the Browns Mills Shopping Village, Red Roof Inn and behind the Pine Grove Shopping Center. Word-of-mouth, newspaper articles, and derelict buildings, especially at major intersections in the downtown area, exacerbate the negative perception of Browns Mills. The residents of Pemberton Township and Browns Mills argue that this is a subjective opinion of Brown Mills and that all municipalities have these problems. Empirical data was collected from the Pemberton Township Police Department\(^{19}\) to determine the amount of reported crimes that occur in the downtown area. Additionally, surveys were sent to business owners and residents to ascertain the community’s perspective on criminal activities in the downtown area. Table 3 below identifies the number of calls that were reported in the study area.

**Table 3: Reported Police Calls in Downtown Browns Mills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Calls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2,034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pemberton Township Police Department

Pemberton Township Police Department’s call reports indicate that over the past ten years the average amount of reported incidents in the downtown area was 2,664, with the highest amount reported in 2005 with 3,267. These statistics indicate that the crime problem in Browns Mills still exists; however, it

\(^{19}\) Specific crime statistics for the revitalization area are unavailable. Data was collected from the following zones: 16 (bus complex), 17 (Juliustown Road), 18 (Pemberton Browns Mills Road/Fort Dix), 20 (Lakeshore), and 21 (Post Office).
has decreased significantly in the past two years. The police department indicates that criminal activity has decreased due to additional patrols in the areas and community action. The police department was able to increase the amount of patrols in the area with funds through the UEZ program. The UEZ program provides funds for two additional police officers in the area as well as a street cleaning crew.

Subjective data was collected from business owners, residents, and visitors through interviews and surveys. Business owners constantly battle the negative stereotype that Browns Mills is unsafe. Business owners opined that the main reason Browns Mills has a poor quality of life perception is due to the amount of homeless and transient people that reside behind the Pine Grove Shopping Center in tents, loitering at the shopping centers, the clientele at the Red Roof Inn, and quantity of vacant and boarded-up buildings in the downtown area.

It appears from the statistics and business community surveys that the perception of crime is a problem in Browns Mills. To improve the quality of life perception in Browns Mills, it is recommended that security cameras be installed, police patrols be increased, and the Township remarket the image of Browns Mills through branding and advertising techniques.

3.6 Circulation
Downtown Browns Mills is accessible by three county roadways: Pemberton Browns Mills Road (CR 530), Juliustown-Browns Mills Road (CR 669), and Trenton Road (CR 545). All three roads are two lane roads with left hand turning lanes and signalized intersections. Burlington County resurfaced and restriped Juliustown Road between Pemberton Browns Mills Road and Mirror Lake in 2008. Pemberton Browns Mills Road, Trenton Road and Lakehurst Road are in good condition. The Right of Way (ROW) for these county roads varies from 38 feet to 66 feet, which makes it difficult for the Township to provide sidewalks and streetscape improvements in the downtown area. For the most part, most of the ROWs are 49.5 feet. Burlington County’s Freeholder adopted an Ultimate County ROW highway map for their roads in 1988. The county plan recommends that the ROW for Juliustown Road, a portion of Pemberton Browns Mills Road and a portion of the Trenton Road be 66 feet. The section of Pemberton Browns Mills Road heading into the downtown area prior to Juliustown Road is proposed to be 86 feet as well as the Trenton Road north of Broadway. The Revitalization Plan contains streetscape improvements that will require land dedications to the county to increase the ROW from 49.5 feet to 66 feet or 86 feet per the county’s highway plan. The ultimate ROW of 86 feet will not be easily met and will facilitate a highway atmosphere in the downtown area. Pemberton should coordinate and resolve the disparity between a downtown streets and the County’s highway plan and lobby against an ultimate ROW in the downtown area of 86 feet.

The remaining streets in the revitalization study area are residential streets, which are in poor condition. The streets are narrow, the asphalt is cracked, the edges are crumbling and several of the roadways are unimproved. The Revitalization Plan recommends that the existing residential streets in poor condition be listed of the Department of Public Works’ road improvement list and incorporated into the Township’s capital improvement plan. As the Revitalization Plan is implemented, it is recommended that new residential streets be constructed with sidewalks and street trees to improve pedestrian circulation in the downtown area.
3.6.1 Circulation Issues

3.6.1.1 Texas Avenue: During the Steering Committee and Master Plan meetings, several streets were identified as streets with excessive speeding or used as a cut-through by military and construction vehicles. Specifically, East Lakeshore Drive, West Lakeshore Drive, and Clubhouse Road were identified as major cut through streets used by military personnel, commuters, and contractor vehicles going to Fort Dix/McGuire Air Force Base and the Fort Dix Federal Correctional Facility. Subsequent to the events on September 11, 2001 (hereafter “September 11th”), the military closed the Texas Avenue and Juliustown Road gates to all nonmilitary persons. Texas Avenue, via Trenton Road, used to be the main connection between Pemberton, Wrightstown and points north of the Joint Base. Burlington County has installed detour signs in Wrightstown at the intersection of Sykesville Road and Wrightstown Cookstown Road (CR 616) directing traffic to take Browns Mills - Cookstown Road, to West Lakeshore Drive (CR 667) around Mirror Lake, to Broadway/Pemberton Browns Mills Road to get to downtown Browns Mills. The military has identified that the closing of Texas Avenue has adversely impacted Pemberton Township and its businesses. The DoD has recently provided funds to Ocean and Burlington Counties to hire a traffic consultant to determine ways to improve circulation around the base and in adjacent municipalities. It is anticipated that the study will commence in Summer 2010.

The additional traffic volumes on East Lakeshore Drive, West Lakeshore Drive and Clubhouse Road are having detrimental impacts on business owners and the residential homes in Browns Mills. Tractor trailers and dump trucks are getting lost around Mirror Lake and stuck on residential streets. Also, the weight of these trucks is starting to deteriorate the condition of the roadways, which will force the Township to make significant capital expenditures to repair the roadways. It is recommended that the Township contact the Burlington County Department of Transportation and request that the County place weight restriction limit signs in Wrightstown and Cookstown to advise truck drivers that East and West Lakeshore Drives are closed to their vehicles.

Gate at Texas Avenue is closed to all nonmilitary persons.

At the beginning of the public participation process, it was assumed that one of the reasons why so many businesses were struggling in Browns Mills was due to the military closing Texas Avenue, leading into the Joint Base, following the events on September 11th. Business owners assumed that trucks and commuters bypassed Browns Mills to get to points north rather than using Trenton Road/Texas Avenue. The newly created alternative routes, as a result of the gates being
closed, directed traffic away from Browns Mills; thus, depleting its consumer base. However, a review of traffic counts reveals that vehicles traveling into Browns Mills have rebounded to the same or increased after the closing of Texas Avenue. This may be a result of an increase in activity on the Joint Base since the merger in late 2006 commenced. Table 4 indicates the Average Daily Trips (ADTs) in Browns Mills.

![Early morning traffic on Pemberton Browns Mills Road.](image)

In 1995 there was an average daily trip of 11,366 into Downtown Browns Mills. Following the events on September 11th, the number of vehicles traveling through Browns Mills decreased to 9,855 in 2005. However, the number of vehicles in the downtown area increased to averages ranging from 13,012 to 16,823 in 2007. The records indicate that following September 11th, there was a significant drop in vehicles traveling through Browns Mills. Residents and retailers contribute this drop in the number of vehicles to the closing of Texas Avenue, which forced motorists to find alternative routes to points north of the base. However, more recent data indicates that the number of vehicles traveling through Browns Mills daily has increased since Texas Avenue closed. These numbers indicate that there is sufficient number of vehicles traveling into the downtown area to spend dollars in the downtown area.

### Table 4: Traffic Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID #</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>ADTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CR 530 LAKEHURST ROAD: 160’ W/O RANCOCAS LANE</td>
<td>4/23/07-5/10/07</td>
<td>16,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CR 530 LAKEHURST ROAD: 395’ E/O CR 645 JUNCTION ROAD</td>
<td>4/25/07-5/10/07</td>
<td>13,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>CR 530 LAKEHURST ROAD: 75’ E/O DEARBORN AVE</td>
<td>4/23/07-5/10/07</td>
<td>11,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>CR 545 TRENTON ROAD: 620’ S/O CR 667 BROADWAY STREET</td>
<td>4/23/07-5/10/07</td>
<td>9,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>CR 545 TRENTON ROAD: 310’ N/O CR 667 BROADWAY STREET</td>
<td>4/23/07-5/10/07</td>
<td>9,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>MANUAL HAND COUNTS AT THE INTERSECTION OF NOTEBOOM AND LAKEHURST ROAD</td>
<td>10/20/2005</td>
<td>9,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>TRENTON ROAD (LAKEHURST TO FORT DIX PROPERTY)</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>11,366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and Burlington County Department of Engineering.

### 3.6.1.2 Broadway and Trenton Road: The light at Trenton Road and Broadway needs to be retimed. Ever since the military closed the gates at Texas Avenue, all employees from Deborah Heart and Lung Center and the Stackhouse Elementary School must go through the light at Trenton Road.
and Broadway because they cannot go through the gates at Fort Dix. During peak travel times in the morning (7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.) there is significant amount of cars queuing-up on Pemberton Browns Mills trying to make the left/right onto Trenton Road. Similarly, during evening peak hours (4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.) cars are queuing-up on Trenton Road trying to make a left/right onto Pemberton Browns Mills Road/Broadway. It is recommended that Township officials work with the Burlington County Department of Transportation to retime this light. It is also recommended the County consider widening both Trenton Road and Pemberton Browns Mills Road and provide longer left hand turning lanes.

3.6.1.3 Intersection of Clubhouse Road and Lakehurst Road
Clubhouse Road is located north of Mirror Lake on the east side of Lakehurst Road. Several residents and Township employees informed the Steering Committee during the visioning process that Clubhouse Road has become a cut through road for traffic heading north towards Wrightstown and North Hanover. Commuters, delivery trucks and dump trucks use Clubhouse Road in order to bypass the traffic lights in Browns Mills. The cut through traffic has become a burden on the residents and is having a detrimental impact to the community. The police department has indicated that this intersection has seen an increase in traffic accidents due to the cut through traffic. It is recommended that weight restriction, local traffic only, and no truck traffic signs be installed on Clubhouse Road to reduce the amount of vehicles using this roadway.

3.7 Public Transportation
There are two public transit lines that provide service to Browns Mills: New Jersey Transit’s (NJ Transit) 317 bus route and Burlington County’s BurLink B-1 shuttle service. The 317 bus line provides service between Philadelphia, PA and Asbury Park, NJ. Within Pemberton Township, the 317 bus stops at Hanover Road, Elizabeth Street, Burlington County Community College, in front of the Browns Mills Shopping Center, and Deborah Heart and Lung Center. The 317 bus runs every one and a half hours during peak hours and every two hours in off peak hours. During the revitalization workshops, representatives from Cross County Connections, NJ Transit and Burlington County informed the Steering Committee that NJ Transit was considering rerouting the 317 bus route away from Downtown Browns Mills because the bus is always late due to the military searching the bus before it proceeds through the military base on its way to Wrightstown Borough. As matter of national security, the military is required to search and escort all public transit vehicles through the military base following the events on September 11th. The rerouting of the 317 bus route away from the downtown area will be devastating to Browns Mills and its residents. Cross County Connections advised the community that there are good ridership numbers in Browns Mills to substantiate the continuation of the bus route through the downtown area. It is recommended that the Township continue to communicate with NJ Transit, Burlington County, Cross County Connections, and the military on maintaining the 317 bus route through Browns Mills. An alternative solution could be rerouting the bus through the residential section of Browns Mills along West Lakeshore Drive towards Cookstown.
3.8 Infrastructure

Jersey Central Power & Lighting (JCP&L) supplies electricity to the Revitalization Area while Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) supplies gas. All the electrical power lines within the Revitalization Area are attached to above ground utility poles. The Steering Committee noted during the visioning process that the aboveground electric wires negatively affect the appearance of the downtown area and block commercial signage. The Steering Committee and stakeholders discussed the feasibility of relocating the utility poles underground to improve the aesthetics in the Downtown Area as well as to provide more flexibility for building design and streetscaping improvements. During the Joint Land Use Study, it was mentioned that aboveground utility poles are a concern for aircraft flying overhead. The Township should enter into conversations with the military and the utility company on relocating the electric lines in Browns Mills underground as a matter public safety. This process is very costly, but there is possible grant funding to municipalities to relocate utility lines. The Township should also adopt a policy (or as part of the redevelopment agreement) that requires redevelopers to relocate all utilities underground.

Above ground electrical transmission lines take away from the streetscape appearance in Browns Mills.

The Pemberton Township Water Department and Pemberton Township MUA have indicated that their existing water and sewer system in the downtown area is in good condition. The water mains in the Revitalization Area are all 8” mains or larger. The water mains are up to code and are in good working condition. The Water Department has no plans to make any major capital improvements to its infrastructure in the Revitalization Area. Currently, there is a water moratorium in Pemberton Township imposed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) until

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20 Meeting with Charles Vester, Administrator of the Pemberton Township Municipal Utilities Authority on December 17, 2009. Correspondence from Raymond Williams, Water Department Superintendent dated September 22, 2009.
contamination issues with Well No. 11 are rectified. It is recommended that the Township continue to develop and implement its vision for Browns Mills as the Township’s Engineer and governing body satisfied all on NJDEP’s concerns regarding Well No. 11. It is anticipated that the water moratorium will be, at the latest, lifted by the end of 2010.

The Pemberton Township MUA indicates that its infrastructure is in good condition and they do not plan to take on any improvements in the Revitalization Area. The Pemberton MUA plant and sludge fields have sufficient capacity to take on more mixed use, commercial, and residential development in Browns Mills. The Pemberton MUA has indicated that several of the lines within the Revitalization Area need to be telescoped prior to any changes in tenant/user because some pipes are clogged and need to be cleaned out prior to receiving a Certificate of Occupancy. The MUA has requested that their staff, prior to the Township authorizing a Certificate of Occupancy, review all change in tenant/use applications within the Revitalization Area. It is recommended that a policy be created that requires commercial, retail and similar uses receive a change in use approval permit from the MUA prior to receiving a Certificate of Occupancy from the Township.
4.0 DOWNTOWN BROWNS MILLS REVITALIZATION PLAN
The purpose and intent of this revitalization plan is to create an exciting neighborhood in Pemberton Township where people can live, work, and play. A viable downtown accommodates diverse lifestyles, incomes, professionals, and land uses. The first step in recreating a viable neighborhood requires implementing future land use and zoning policies that will build a critical mass that encourages pedestrian activity on the street. The TC zoning district should be revised to include mixed use buildings with commercial/retail space on the first floor and office/commercial/residential on the second floor. Professional office space is discouraged on the first floor because it does not create any activity or economic value after 5:00 pm or on the weekends. The TC bulk requirements should be revised to place less focus on setback requirements and more emphasis on building form and its placement and relationship to street. The revitalization plan recommends the Township adopt a formed-base zoning code that establishes a street hierarchy, building typology list, and design standards for all development in the TC zone.

Section 4.9 identifies recommended building types and revised bulk requirements for the TC area. This section controls the overall form of streets, blocks and buildings to create the physical character envisioned in the revitalization plan. This section also defines the general standards that apply to all development. The standards primarily control aspects of buildings and site elements that define street edges and corners to create a pedestrian-friendly public realm. The purpose of these specific guidelines is to ensure that the Township’s vision, both physical and emotionally, within in this plan comes to fruition. In general, diverse and shared land uses are encouraged.

4.1 Area A: Main Street – Juliustown Road
4.1.1 Existing Condition
Juliustown Road, Trenton Road and Pemberton Browns Mills Road are the main thoroughfares into Browns Mills. Travelers from Philadelphia and Trenton would use these roadways on their way to shore points and would stop in Browns Mills to freshen-up at one of the luxurious boarding houses, eat at one of the restaurants, or stay for a couple of days and utilize the recreation opportunities at Mirror Lake. Juliustown Road became the Main Street in Browns Mills and several local historians continue to refer to Juliustown Road as Main Street. These roadways used to be filled with neighborhood commercial stores, tree-lined sidewalks, and well-designed boarding houses.

Unfortunately, Juliustown Road, Trenton Road and Pemberton Browns Mills Road now resemble poorly planned streets with too many curb cuts, disconnected sidewalks, dilapidated buildings and lackluster commercial appeal. Victorian buildings, tree-lined sidewalks, and small-scaled retail stores were cleared for parking lots and retail strip centers that are now obsolete and underutilized. These three roads collective form a triangle that creates the main commercial district in Browns Mills.
4.1.2 Recommendations

1. *Eastside of Juliustown Road:* The eastside of Juliustown Road is the most noticeable street in all of Browns Mills. To set the theme for a newly reinvigorated downtown area, the revitalization plan recommends that a new public plaza be created on the eastside of Juliustown Road. A commercial prominent building occupied by an anchor tenant should be constructed at the apex of the public plaza. The prominent building should have an iconic architectural element on top of the building such as a clock tower, cupola, or steeple to draw people into the plaza area. Mixed use buildings that support the needs of the downtown community should flank the prominent building. All buildings should front the street with limited setback from the ROW. The new facades shall be placed on existing buildings fronting Juliustown Road to bring them closer to the road and create more of a human-scaled environment. Parking is precluded in the front yard setback. A wide sidewalk and streetscaping should be provided to encourage pedestrian circulation, human interaction, and ground level activity.

A public plaza with a fountain, dancing water fountains and park elements, such as benches should be construction, which, will encourage people to stay in the downtown area for longer periods of time. The public plaza can be utilized for farmers’ markets, community events, and entertainment. A new one way road with on-street parallel parking will be created to facilitate vehicles around the plaza. The new roadway will connect with Dearborn Avenue.

The intersection of Trenton Road, Juliustown Road and Lakehurst Road used to be lined with trees, sidewalks, and landscaping.

Juliustown Road is a lackluster roadway with auto-oriented land uses, excessive curb cuts, dilapidated buildings, and haphazard parking arrangements.
2. **Westside of Juliustown Road:**

The westside of Juliustown Road from Pemberton Browns Mills Road to Mirror Lake Dam consist of professional offices, commercial stores, fast food eateries, apartments and a hotel. There is a large homeless and transient population that loiters along the westside of Juliustown Road, specifically behind the Red Roof Inn, Browns Mills Shopping Village and Rita’s Water Ice. The Red Roof, formerly known as the Budget Hotel, is a well-known location for criminal activities and loitering. Burlington County provides people with rental vouchers to live at the hotel. Although the building is marketed under a new name, the preexisting conditions still remain. Representatives from the Joint Base have indicated that they need a high-end hotel closer to the base with extended stay units to house military personnel, guests, and families. There are limited hotel rooms near the military base; therefore, the military sends their guests to Bordentown and Cherry Hill. Wrightstown Borough is in the process of developing a hotel with extended stay to meet some the military’s demand. Additionally, Deborah Heart and Lung Center send their families to hotels in Bordentown. Ideally, this hotel should be converted to a better hotel and retail space should be attached. The Township many want to consider a joint venture with the military to purchase the building and transform it into a suitable hotel for the military and guests at Deborah Hospital.

Similar to the eastside of Juliustown Road, all buildings frontages should be expanded towards the front property line to create a pedestrian environment and to facilitate a better site design. Wide sidewalks (10’-12’) and streetscape elements are also recommended. Parking is precluded in the front yard.

A revitalized Red Roof would provide an opportunity to meet the demand for hotel and extended services needed by the military and Deborah.

Trash, debris and broken fences are found along Juliustown Road.
3. Municipal Parking Lot: Pemberton Township owns the municipal parking lot located behind the Browns Mills Emergency Management Squad (EMS) building, Dr. Shapiro Family Medicine and Subway Deli on Juliustown Road. Very few shoppers, especially residents, know that the parking lot exists. The parking lot is in poor condition and requires maintenance including milling, repaving and stripping. For the most part, the parking lot is underutilized and contractor vehicles and trailers use the parking lot for temporary parking and storage. Since the revitalization plan recommends more building massing, density and street activity, it is recommended that the parking lot be expanded, repaved and reoriented to accommodate the demand in parking associated with new development. Additionally, the Revitalization Plan recommends that Market Street be continued to Busansky Road to provide for better circulation.
4. **Land Acquisition:** In conjunction with implementing the new public plaza and roadway, revitalizing Juliustown Road requires the Township to take an active role in the purchase of lands deemed necessary for economic revitalization that will improve both the social and financial well being of the community. The Revitalization Plan recommends the Township (or private investor) purchase properties along eastside of Juliustown Road including NAPA Auto Parts, Sun Market, the adjacent retail shopping center, Dr. Shapiro’s office, and three residential homes. Several of these properties are listed for sale. The New Jersey Redevelopment Authority and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority provides funds to municipalities for building and land acquisition cost. The economic development of Browns Mills will be enhanced by meeting this objective.
PROPOSED REVITALIZATION OF JULIUSTOWN ROAD – MAIN STREET
4.2 Area B: Noteboom Avenue Corridor

4.2.1 Existing Condition
Noteboom Avenue is an unimproved roadway just north of the North Branch of the Rancocas Creek. Situated within this area is Township-owned vacant land, a cluster of single family homes, the Browns Mills Post Office, and the Senior Center. Between Noteboom Avenue and Dearborn Avenue there are approximately 24.27 acres of which the Township owns 15.82 acres. The Township-owned land is impacted by a 240 foot wetlands buffer which reduces the Township’s portion of uplands for development to approximately 4.92 acres. The wetlands buffer has made it challenging to attract viable commercial developers to these parcels. A portion of the Noteboom Avenue Corridor is within the military’s recommended APZ II overlay area.

4.2.2 Recommendations
1. Pinelands Buffer Requirement: Noteboom Avenue Corridor provides an opportunity to infuse new commercial and residential development in Browns Mills. In 2000, the Township started to communicate with the Pinelands Commission on the possibility of developing a buffer reduction plan for the Township-owned land north of the Rancocas Creek to facilitate commercial and office development. The existing buffer requirement imposed by the Pinelands Commission is 240 feet, which was determined when a developer proposed building a grocery market in this area. In an effort to make the area more attractive to developers, the Township asked the Pinelands Commission for a buffer reduction. The Pinelands Commission instructed the Township to develop a plan for the buffer reductions. They advised the Township to provide a plan that included a wetlands survey, location of future paving and building placements, and buffer protection areas. Due to a lack of private investment and public funding, the Township did not follow through with the wetlands analysis. As part of the visioning process, members of the Steering Committee met with the Pinelands to discuss future development potential along Noteboom Avenue. The Pinelands Commission advised the Steering Committee to reinitiate this analysis. It is recommended that the Township pursue UEZ funds to complete this wetlands analysis in order to determine an amicable buffer reduction plan.

2. Residential Units: Over the past two years, members from the Steering Committee have spoken to real estate
brokers, commercial developers, and commercial-chain stores to see if they would be interested in establishing a commercial business in Browns Mills. Overwhelmingly, these real estate professionals informed the Steering Committee members that Pemberton Township does not have the population numbers “roof tops” to support an anchor store and supporting tenants. The loss of the military population, decrease in job opportunities, and the perception that Browns Mills is unsafe for families has reduced the population in Pemberton from 31,342 (1990) to 27,975 (2008), a decrease of 3,367 persons. This decrease in population has also had a negative impact on the school district, which has seen its enrollment numbers decrease from 5,887 in 1999 to 5,008 in 2008, a reduction of 819 students (14.2%). Additionally, the military proposes placing Fort Dix Elementary School under the control of the North Hanover School District with Pemberton’s teachers being converted into North Hanover employees. Fort Dix Elementary School’s enrollment of 160 students is 100 percent military. The school is owned by the United States Department of Education but is managed by the Pemberton School District. The United States Department of Education would have to approve the military’s proposal to transfer control to North Hanover. If the redistricting occurs and the school district loses 160 children, Pemberton’s School District could possibly see its state aid cut by over $2,800,000. Pemberton School District Superintendent Michael Gorman has informed the Steering Committee members that the school district needs more homes with school-aged children to make up deficits in the school’s budget, state funding cuts, and enrollment. The military has also indicated that they will have a shortage of housing units on base and they require additional housing units for families being transferred to the Joint Base. It is recommended that a mixture of single family, townhouses, and twin residential units be constructed in this area to support the school district and provide housing options for young professionals, college students and military personnel. This land use is consistent with existing land uses in the area and will have less of an impact on the environment. More residential density is needed in Browns Mills to support the commercial businesses as well as increase the Township’s population to attract more viable retailers. It is also recommended that a community park, such as a tot lot with playground equipment, be created in this area to support the recreational needs of the residents.

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21 2007-2008 New Jersey Board of Education Enrollment Data

3. **Complete the Street Grid:** The vacant parcels along Noteboom Avenue are already surveyed in a traditional grid pattern. There are several roads in the Noteboom area that are unimproved and indicated as paper streets on the tax maps. To improve circulation and make the area more
accessible from Juliustown Road and Pemberton Browns Mills Road, it is recommended that the following roads be created and/or improved:

- Dearborn Avenue: Fairfield Street to Juliustown Plaza
- Fairfield Street: Dearborn Avenue to Berkshire Street
- Ashton Street: Dearborn Avenue to Berkshire Street
- Brook Street: Dearborn Avenue to Berkshire Street and Millview Road
- Berkshire Street: Dearborn Avenue to Juliustown Road
- Juliustown Plaza: Semicircle on Juliustown Road

4. Parking for the Senior Community Center: At the Master Plan Workshops and Steering Committee Meetings, senior citizens and representatives from the Parks and Recreation Department indicated that there is an insufficient amount of parking at the senior center even with the senior bus providing free public transportation. There are only 33 parking spaces at the senior center and employees and senior citizens use all of them. The Senior Center Program Director has indicated that the facility requires 20 additional parking spaces. When all the parking spaces are being used, seniors park on the grass between the trees at the senior center and across the street in the Post Office’s parking lot. The Post Office has remained silent on this issue even though several residents have raised concerns that there is not enough parking at the post office during certain hours of the day. On the other side of Brook Street (directly across from the Senior Center), there are 8 vacant parcels (Block 534; Lots 23 - 30) owned by O’Brien and Sons Hardware which the Township could purchase and create additional parking for the Senior Center. The lots are each 20’ x 80’ totaling 0.29 acres which would approximately yield 25 parking spaces.

Example of a car parking between the trees at the senior center.
PROPOSED REVITALIZATION OF THE NOTEBOOM AVENUE CORRIDOR
4.3 Area C: Pemberton Browns Mills Road

4.3.1 Existing Conditions
Pemberton Browns Mills Road is the main west-to-east roadway into Browns Mills. It is arguably the main thoroughfare into Browns Mills and is the Township’s gateway. There are two major shopping centers situated on Pemberton Browns Mills Road: the Browns Mills Shopping Center and the Pine Grove Shopping Center. As noted earlier in this report, the Browns Mills Shopping Center is a blighted center that adversely impacts the Township’s ability to attract new businesses and shoppers to the area. The Pine Grove Shopping Center is a newer commercial area that contains most of the retail stores in the entire Township.

4.3.2 Recommendations
1. Pemberton Browns Mills Road - Browns Mills Shopping Center: The first perception travelers see when they enter Browns Mills is the boarded-up Acme grocery store in the Browns Mills Shopping Center, Skip’s Tavern, and a vacant roofing contractor business. The Browns Mills Shopping Center (Block 775, Lots 19) has been an eyesore in the downtown area for over 25 years and continues to plague the community. The owner, Mr. Rocco Berardi, is an out-of-town landlord owner who has neglected to revitalize the idle property for over two decades. Over the past 25 years, he has assured the Township that he intends to revitalize the shopping center into an attractive well-maintained retail center with new facades, commercial pad sites, infill development, and completely redevelop the Acme Market. In 2006, the planning board approved the owners’ site improvements; however, the shopping center continues to remain blighted, stagnate, substandard, partially abandoned, all of which devalues the entire downtown area. The boarded-up Acme building has been vacant for over ten years and has been cited for several building code violations. The façade for the main retail shopping center is cracked, portions of the roof leak, there are nine tenant vacancies and the asphalt loading areas in the rear of building are crumbling apart.

The Browns Mills Shopping continues to be an eyesore in the downtown area with unappealing façade, dilapidated buildings and vacant storefronts.

The soil and groundwater at the site has been contaminated by tetrachloroethene (PCE) above soil remedial standards due to discharges associated with a former dry cleaning facility at the
The PCEs were encountered during soil and groundwater investigations completed in conjunction the closure of ten regulated heated oil underground storage tanks which has its own environmental issues the owner is working with NJDEP to remedy. Mr. Berardi and his professional consultants advised the Planning Board and the Township that he cannot make the changes to the site due to lack of financing and does not plan to move forward with the site rehabilitation per his site plan approvals. It is recommended that the governing body continue to work with Mr. Berardi with making site improvements and façade upgrades to the shopping center. If Mr. Berardi continues to be unwilling to improve his site and it remains stagnate and blighted, it is recommended the Township take aggressive action and utilize its redevelopment powers in order facilitate new development on this parcel that is consistent with the vision of this plan. It is also recommended that if a new developer (or redeveloper) purchases the site, they should redevelop the site with the new design standards recommended within this report such as mixed use buildings, buildings that abut the front property line, and parking in the rear.

To encourage better planning principals and Smart Growth Planning policies, it is recommended that any development at the Browns Mills Shopping Center be consolidated with Block 75, Lot 18. Township tax maps indicate that Lot 18 is 2.95± acres and is located within the Township’s designated Redevelopment Area and Town Center zoning district. The lot is heavily wooded with mature trees and ground level vegetation. To the south of Lot 18 is the Browns Mills Shopping Center, to the west is Lake Shore Mobile Home Village, to the north is a single family house and storage garage (poor condition), and to the east Trenton Road. The irregularly shaped lot can only be accessed from Trenton Road. The width of Lot 18 ranges from 231 feet wide on Trenton Road and narrows to approximately 63 feet at the midway point of lot. It will be challenging to develop the irregularly shaped lot by itself. Lot 18 should be consolidated with Lot 19 to create a larger land area, which will help improve the marketing ability of site to different users and facilitate better community design, improve vehicular circulation, and satisfy Pinelands Stormwater Management Rules.

2. Southside of Pemberton Browns Mills Road: Beneficial Bank, ABCO Credit Union and CVS have recently completed constructing new buildings in the downtown area that include sidewalks, landscaping and have some curb appeal. These buildings have upgraded the Township’s gateway. Unfortunately, Browns Mills lacks contiguous sidewalks, ADA compliant sidewalks, and streetscape elements. It is recommended that the Township require all new development along Pemberton Browns Mills Road to construct ADA compliant sidewalks and ramps to improve pedestrian circulation in the downtown area. It is also recommended that buffering and street trees be planted to soften the appearance of the industrial land uses located on the roadway. Additionally, all new buildings should be oriented towards Pemberton Browns Mills Road, abut the front property line, and place parking in the rear.

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Newer construction has provided sidewalks on Pemberton Browns Mills Road.

Existing sidewalk condition on Pemberton Browns Mills Road

3. Lakeshore Mobile Home Community: Lakeshore Mobile Home Community is located at 102 Pemberton Brown Mills Road. There are 137 home sites and an office building within the community. Garden Homes Management Corporation in Stanford, CT, owns the property which is approximately 60 acres of which approximately 48 acres are within the study area. There is an existing evergreen tree buffer that separates the pad sites and Pemberton Browns Mills Road. As discussed in Section 3.3.2, it is recommended that the first 300 feet (in width) from Pemberton Browns Mills Road be rezoned from Mobile Home and Residential (R-3) to Town Center to facilitate more concentrated commercial development along Pemberton Browns Mills Road. Additionally screening and buffering should be provided between the residential units and commercial tenants to serve as a transition zone between the land uses and to improve the appearance along Pemberton Browns Mills Road. In the interim, the existing buffering and vegetation along Pemberton Browns Mills should be maintained and viewshed gaps should be filled with evergreen plants.

4. APZ Overlay District: Representatives from the Joint Base informed the Township’s during the revitalization visioning process that the Lakeshore Mobile Home Community is located within the military’s APZ II overlay area. The Department of Defense does not recommend single family homes on less than three acres or multifamily homes, specifically mobile home community, within the APZ II zone. Council reviewed an APZ ordinance which would implement an overlay district that would preclude the development of residential dwellings on less than three acres in the APZ II overlay. As part of the ordinance, there was a clause that prevented non-conforming land uses, such as residential units on less than three acres, from rebuilding if it was destroyed by weather, fire, or natural disaster. This clause is consistent with the Municipal Land Use Law.
which indicates “total destruction of a non-conforming use, whether by design or accident, terminates the use.” Several residents in MH and R-3 zoning districts, voiced concerns that the APZ ordinance is a “taking” since they cannot rebuild their homes if it was destroyed. In effort to support the military’s mission and protect the interests of the residents, it is recommended that the Township consider adopting a revised APZ overlay ordinance that would allow preexisting homes to be rebuilt by the same owner if it was destroyed.