

# **NORTH CLINTON AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN**

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT  
CITY OF TRENTON, NEW JERSEY**

**DECEMBER 1997**

## ***NORTH CLINTON AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN***

### **A. Description of Project Area and Goals / Objectives**

The North Clinton Avenue Redevelopment Area includes all of the properties fronting North Clinton Avenue bounded by the Belvedere Railroad Right of Way to the west and Girard Avenue and Lawrence Street to the east. The Project Area is bounded on the south side by the Assunpink Creek and on the north side by Roff Street, Agnes Alley and St. Joes Avenue.

#### **1. Boundaries of the Project Area**

The specific boundaries are as shown on the attached Boundary Map, dated December 1997 and include the following blocks of properties:

15-2E, 15A-1B, 15A-1A, 15A-2D, 15A-2B, 15A-2A, 15A-2C, 193-D, 193-C, 193-A, 193-B, 194-C, 196-E, 198-A, 198-C, 198-E, 198-F, 198-G, 198-F, 198-G, 198-D, 198-B, 196-C, 202-B, 202-C, 202-D, 202-E, 197-A, 196-A, 202-A & 203-B

#### **2. Goals and Objectives**

- a. To reinforce & strengthen the existing urban character of the neighborhood, a cohesive mix of commercial and residential uses, by rehabilitating suitable existing deteriorating structures.
- b. To enhance the commercial and business activity along North Clinton Avenue and promote it as a viable vehicular and pedestrian artery within the City by eliminating the blighting influence of vacant buildings and incompatible uses (junkyards), improving traffic flow and patterns along the corridor, redesigning the streetscape and developing the properties at the corners of North Clinton Avenue and North Olden Avenue as the hub of neighborhood business activity. In conjunction, to discourage scattered and nonviable commercial uses in order to concentrate more viable and needed businesses closer toward the North Olden hub.
- c. To facilitate the development of the properties adjoining the Assunpink Creek into a linear greenway linking open space areas along the waterway throughout the City. This in turn will serve to create needed passive and active recreational open space for the residents of the adjoining neighborhood and the residents of the city of Trenton as a whole.

- d. To create through streets (see the attached Land Use Map) to reestablish the urban grid fabric of the residential neighborhoods adjoining the proposed greenway and by constructing new housing units where incompatible land uses exist in order to increase “eyes on the greenway” and in turn enhance safety in the rear neighborhoods along the proposed open space.
- e. To mitigate and provide an effective transitional buffer between residential and business activity along North Clinton Avenue and the adjoining light industrial uses of the Route 1 Redevelopment Area.
- f. To investigate the adequacy of public facilities, particularly to investigate the relocation of the neighborhood firehouse to a location that would serve the area more efficiently.

### **3. Land Use Plan**

#### **Land Use Provisions & Building Requirements**

##### **A. Permitted Land Uses**

The permitted land uses are as indicated on the attached Land Use Map dated December 1997. The redevelopment area is designated as a combination of Business B along the North Clinton corridor, Residential B throughout the existing residential neighborhoods and on properties fronting the proposed greenway along the freightyards an Open Space designation is appropriate. These uses allow for a variety of compatible and mutually supportive facilities including single family, semidetached and row type housing, commercial service businesses - bakeries, laundromats, convenience stores, pharmacies, banks, etc. as well as apartment units over storefronts, outdoor recreational areas and light industrial businesses to provide needed jobs for area residents. Housing and neighborhood retail and personal service businesses are considered primarily important and must relate to adjacent residential blocks and the proposed greenway.

In an effort to make those functioning industrial properties within the Project Area more compatible with these residential, commercial and open space uses, these areas have been upgraded from an Industrial B heavy industrial usage to an Industrial A light industrial usage. Existing properties being utilized for light industrial uses in the existing Industrial B District on the date of the adoption of this ordinance shall remain grandfathered permitted uses. Expansion of these industrial uses is subject to the review and approval of the Planning Board as conditional uses.

Expansions of these existing industrial uses are permitted if it can be found, after full Planning Board review and after consideration of reasonable conditions, that the uses:

- a. Do not have an adverse impact on the existing adjoining neighborhood by limiting the comfortable enjoyment of property rights in the immediate areas, do not produce noxious odors or create substantial visual obtrusions, or subject adjoining uses to excessive noise, glare, heat or vibrations.
- b. Have a satisfactory storage and waste disposal plan, can adequately ventilate the facility, and do not create conditions of imminent hazard by utilizing explosive or flammable materials.
- c. Have planned or provided for a substantial buffering between their use and the adjoining residential or commercial uses.

Further in order to receive Planning Board approval, these industrial uses must demonstrate that they will meet all applicable building and fire codes and any regulations of the Department of Inspections.

## **B. Building Requirements**

The existing Zoning Ordinance requirements for RB and BB districts respectively shall apply for bulk standards and setbacks for new building construction. Built structures other than those ancillary to the open space areas such as clubhouses, batting cages, public rest rooms, play equipment and play storage sheds, etc. shall not be permitted in the zones designated OS.

1. Infill construction along North Clinton Avenue should incorporate the character of the existing brick facades. In all areas where infill construction will be undertaken, the proposed units and or rehabilitation of units shall respect and incorporate such existing design features as cornice lines, trim work and roof and floor heights. All new and rehabilitated building facades shall be submitted for review and approval by the Division of Planning at the time of site plan application to the Planning Board.
2. Regulations, controls and restrictions regarding the construction of new buildings shall be determined by the City of Trenton Zoning Ordinance, but the Department of

Housing and Development may also make recommendations in site planning and design as seen appropriate in the implementation of the plan objectives.

3. In order to insure functional coordination essential to carrying out the objectives of the Redevelopment Plan, developers shall agree to certain controls through such means as are deemed appropriate by the Department of Housing and Development. Such controls will be concerned with the functional considerations and will not relieve developers of their responsibilities to comply with all ordinances and governmental rules and regulations. The Department of Housing and Development specifically reserves the right to review and approve the developers' detailed plans, final working drawings and specifications.

### **C. Project Proposals**

1. Land Acquisition

The City may, in order to achieve the objectives of this plan, acquire property within the Redevelopment Area.

2. Redeveloper's Obligations

In order to achieve the objectives of this Redevelopment Plan, developers are to construct improvements in conformity with this plan and begin such construction within a reasonable time as determined by the Department of Housing and Development.

### **D. Other Provisions Necessary to Meet State and Local Requirements**

The laws of the State of New Jersey require that any redevelopment project be undertaken in accordance with the redevelopment plan for the Project Area.

Further, the proposals in this Redevelopment Plan are in accordance with the local plan objectives and the Master Plan of the City of Trenton.

#### **1. Land Use**

The Land Use Plan indicates proposed uses following the redevelopment. The land uses shown are in general

Area,  
neighborhood  
of existing  
light industrial  
conditions.

conformity with the local objectives for the Project  
which is designated for residential and  
commercial uses along with the maintenance  
neighborhood and environmentally friendly  
uses as restricted by the above stated

## 2. **Density of Population**

The residential neighborhoods of the Project Area  
designated RB are fairly stable; however, given there are  
scattered vacant and boarded, deteriorating homes  
throughout this neighborhood, similar to the projects  
completed in the area by Habitat for Humanity and Trenton  
CityHome Corporation, these unhabitable units will  
be renovated or demolished and replaced with new units.  
A significant increase in population density is therefore not  
anticipated in these areas.

Some portions of the Project Area bordering the  
freightyards (the future Assunpink Greenway) will be  
remediated and will be developed for new medium density  
housing fronting and framing the new open space area.  
While the rehabilitation of existing units will not involve  
an increase in population density, new units along the  
greenway will slightly increase the density of the area.  
This projected increase in residential density will be  
alleviated by eliminating incompatible uses, opening up the  
freightyards and creating a vast open space area for passive  
and active recreational activities. The redevelopment of  
the North Clinton corridor and upgrading of commercial  
activity will also aid in serving the needs of this large  
residential area.

The North Clinton Avenue corridor properties were always  
and will continue to be designated BB. This designation  
allows for the use of upper floor levels of commercial  
buildings to be utilized for apartments. At the present time,  
these mixed-use properties often are either totally vacant or  
contain vacant apartment tenancies. Since future  
development will not involve adding more units to  
corridor than once stood at the height of its  
no real increase in density will occur.  
development of the vast open space  
corridor will more than

the  
development,  
Again, the  
area to the south of the

adequately provide for the open Project Area.

space needs of the

### **3. Traffic and Transportation**

The impact of the traffic from the adjoining Route One Industrial Area upon North Clinton Avenue will be investigated. Measures to mitigate and minimize negative impacts on the adjoining commercial corridor need to be investigated. If necessary, new traffic lights, widening the cartway by restricting parking and providing other traffic calming devices will be employed to help control traffic flow. In order to remedy the situation, it may be necessary to restrict parking during peak traffic hours on either side of North Clinton Avenue and construct surface parking lots adjacent to new commercial uses.

The City is also currently putting into place a new wayfinding program including street signage and kiosks. This should allow for more fluid pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow through the Project Area and throughout the City.

The Project Area is currently served well by public bus system.

### **4. Public Utilities**

The development of vacant parcels throughout the Project Area may require the installation of new utility services. A majority of the vacant structures to be rehabilitated can utilize existing service laterals.

There are no new public utility improvements planned for the rehabilitation work either since the existing utilities are adequate for the proposed redevelopment.

### **5. Recreational and Community Facilities**

The Project Area is served by such recreational and community facilities such as the East Trenton Center and the North Ward Community Center. These community centers offer a vast variety of community services and programs for both adults and children. While the East Trenton Center has become a voice for community needs, strengthening of community and recreational programs or

even day care programs Center as well community outreach programs should be investigated at the North Ward Community Center. Several small neighborhood parks are scattered throughout the Area, and the additional development of the new linear greenway along the Assunpink Creek will provide an ample amount of additional outdoor recreational space for both passive and active programs. The rehabilitation of the park along Fillmore Street currently underway will also provide an outlet for outdoor community gatherings and recreational activities.

## **6. Open Space**

parks

As previously stated, there are several existing pocket within the residential neighborhoods as well as community gardens. The addition of the linear greenway to the area will provide a larger variety of outdoor activities requiring bigger expanses of space such as a driving range, soccer or baseball fields. The Assunpink Greenway planned for this Project Area is approximately 20-25% of the redevelopment Area and will more than adequately address recreational needs of the Project Area residents.

The Assunpink Greenway development will involve both passive and active recreational space eventually connecting with the downtown portion of the greenway via the abandoned railroad right of way on the western

border of large open baseball fields, a or a combination of acquisition process and funding. Preliminary plans application will be studied and a will be hired to formalize the physical layout of each activity space as well as all

the Project Area. As previously stated this space area may include a driving range, running track, a soccer field, a tot lot these. The freightyards are in the have received Green Acres drawn for the funding landscape architect plan and

vegetation and landscaping. The plans for the greenway will be discussed and reviewed at community meetings. All plans for the greenway must then be approved by the City's Landscape Architect, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Housing and Development.

## **7. Regulations and Controls**

amended,

All standards relating to land coverage lot dimensions, yard sizes, building heights and the like are given in accord with the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Trenton as unless specifically addressed in this plan.

## **8. Relocation Plan**

If any temporary or permanent displacement should occur as a result of the implementation of this Redevelopment Plan, relocation assistance as required by State and or Federal Law will be provided by the Division of Real Estate, Bureau of Property Management. Relocation plans shall apply to residential as well as commercial properties.

## **E. Procedure for Changing Approved Plan**

The Redevelopment Plan may be amended from time to time upon compliance with requirements of law, provided that with respect to any land in the Project Area previously disposed of by the Department of Housing and Development for use in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan, the Department of Housing and Development receives the written consent of the then owner of such land whose interest, as determined by the Department of Housing and Development, is materially affected by such amendment.

This redevelopment plan shall be in effect for a period of 30 years following its official adoption by City Council.

## **F. Project Maps and Photographs**

1. Boundary Map
2. Land Use Map
3. Photographs of the Project Area

# **REPORT DETERMINING THE**

**NORTH CLINTON AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT AREA  
AN AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT**

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT  
CITY OF TRENTON, NEW JERSEY**

**AUGUST 1997**

The purpose of this report is to prove that the North Clinton Avenue Redevelopment Area is an “area in need of redevelopment” within the definition of the State Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, Chapter 79, P.L. 1992 so that it may be declared a “Redevelopment Area”.

A delineated area may be determined to be in need of redevelopment if, after investigation, notice and public hearing as provided in Section 6 of P.L. 1992, (C. 79), the governing body of the municipality by resolution concludes that within the delineated area any of the following conditions exist. That within the subject area:

- a. The generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions.
- b. The discontinuance of the use of buildings previously used for commercial, manufacturing, or light industrial purposes; the abandonment of such buildings; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenantable.
- c. Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or redevelopment entity, or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access is unlikely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital.
- d. Areas with buildings or improvement which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community.
- e. A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real property therein or other conditions, resulting in stagnant or not fully productive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare.
- f. Areas in excess of five contiguous acres, whereon buildings or improvements have been destroyed, consumed by fire, demolished altered by the action of storm, fire, cyclone, tornado, earthquake or other casualty in such a way that the aggregate assessed value of the area has been materially depreciated.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT AREA**

The Project Area is the portion of the city known as East Trenton. This neighborhood once was the center of Trenton's ceramic industry with a thriving business corridor and adjoining residential neighborhoods. During the course of the last twenty years, East Trenton lost much of its industrial base and as a result, the North Clinton corridor has been spiraling downward in decline with increased commercial and residential vacancies and abandonment. Although the residential neighborhood in between the Assunpink Creek and North Clinton Avenue has remained relatively stable, there are scattered condemned and boarded row homes located on every block. The southern extremity of the Project Area fronting on the Assunpink Creek consists of a mix of junkyards and vacant and occupied industrial garages which are not only incompatible land uses with the adjoining residential neighborhoods but in several cases, are not structurally sound or habitable.

A recent vacancy survey along North Clinton Avenue revealed 32 properties consisting of vacant abandoned land and approximately 31 plots of land with vacant deteriorating structurally unsound buildings (see the attached Vacancy Map dated November 1997). These vacancies comprise approximately 30% of the properties along the North Clinton corridor. Today East Trenton's successful new industrial park along North Clinton between Ott and Dewey combined with the scattered rehabilitation of deteriorating housing stock is stimulating a partial resurgence of the Project Area. Although there have been attempts to improve housing along this corridor and to bring back needed service businesses, these efforts have been piecemeal and lack a cohesive plan to concentrate and direct assistance from the City, non profit organizations and private investors.

Vacant and structurally unsound industrial buildings and junkyards fronting the Assunpink Creek pose significant health and safety hazards to the adjoining residential neighborhoods. The use of these prime lands along the creek for junkyards and dumping grounds is inappropriate and inconsistent with adjoining residential land uses and with the proposed open space plan for the freight yard properties on the opposite side of the Assunpink including a passive and active recreational greenway. These junkyards, vehicle storage lots, and half-collapsing older industrial garages create a blighting influence on the periphery of the East Trenton area. In short, a viable, yet struggling residential neighborhood is caught in between the fringes of a deteriorated commercial corridor on its northern border and hazardous and inappropriate industrial uses on its southern edge.

In addition to the problems concerning the physical condition of the Project Area properties and incompatible land uses, the Project Area has an insufficient amount of retail service or convenience businesses for the adjoining residents. A laundromat along with three small convenience stores struggle to serve the area, but unfortunately the needs of the large residential population are not met. Basic retail business which some take for granted such as a drug store or even a bakery are no where to be found along the

commercial strip. The North Clinton corridor is made up of a weak link of struggling businesses that try to stay alive amidst adjacent boarded properties and vacant littered plots of land.

## **BASIS FOR DETERMINATION FOR THE NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT**

After conducting several site visits of the Project Area, documenting vacancies and evaluating the commercial corridor and the sagging industrial base bordering the creek, the Division of Planning considers the Project Area to be in need of concentrated and directed efforts to promote the improvement of quality of life for the residential neighborhoods composing the backbone of East Trenton. This Project Area is considered an area in need of redevelopment according to the State and Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, Chapter 79, P.L. 1992 on the basis of several conditions including b,c,d, & e.

Within the subject area it can be shown that:

- b. The discontinuance of the use of buildings previously used for commercial, manufacturing, or light industrial purposes; the abandonment of such buildings; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenantable.

There are vacant industrial buildings fronting the Assunpink Creek, which are structurally unsound and most likely in need of remediation from toxins in the soil. In particular on Block 15A-2B, a vacant industrial building with failing and decaying wood framing members is literally falling down and appears to be collapsing in upon itself. There are several tanks both above and underground on each of these sites which will need to be tested for leakage into the soil and contamination and be remediated before new construction can take place. In general these vacant industrial structures are untenantable due to both the needed remediation efforts and the general state of disrepair which they have undergone over the last ten years.

- c. Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or redevelopment entity, or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access is unlikely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital.

There are a variety of parcels of unimproved land along the North Clinton corridor, which have remained so for ten years or more. These parcels of vacant land once did contain structures; however, due to the fact that they were untenantable and posed health and safety hazards to the public, they were torn down and now await redevelopment. The parcels in question include: vacant land

on the corner of Fillmore and North Clinton, vacant land on the corner of Webster and North Clinton, a vacant lot fronting North Clinton in the middle of the block between Webster and North Olden which currently serves as a dirt parking area, a significant parcel fronting North Clinton in between cross streets Eastburn and Meade currently a billboard location and a community garden and another significant compilation of several lots fronting North Clinton Avenue in between cross streets Perrine and Oak. In some cases, these lots are in between viable businesses, churches and residences; in more serious situations, such as those between Perrine and Tyrell, they comprise 75% of the block, while still in other cases, such as the Eastburn and Meade properties fronting North Clinton, they compose the entire North Clinton frontage. Unimproved land awaiting redevelopment for over 10 years serves as a blighting influence on a struggling and dying commercial corridor and on the interior residential neighborhoods of the Project Area.

- d. Areas with buildings or improvement which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community.

There are several buildings along North Clinton Avenue, which have been allowed to deteriorate beyond a point of repair and would require major structural and cosmetic work in order to be habitable. Bordered up facades hide behind them structural decay caused by leaking roofs and window and door openings needing all new units. A complete overhaul of electrical and mechanical systems, repointing of brick and interior renovations need to be performed. Most if not all of these buildings, beyond not meeting basic structural requirements would also not meet today's code standards for egress, hall and stairway width or handicap accessibility for first floor storefronts. These dilapidated buildings fronting north Clinton Avenue are detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the community.

- e. A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real property therein or other conditions, resulting in stagnant or not fully productive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare.

There are several sites within the Project Area, which satisfy this condition. In particular several properties along North Clinton Avenue between Perrine and Hart Streets are owned by the City however there are parcels of privately owned vacant land scattered throughout this particular area which makes the acquisition of a sizable contiguous lot for redevelopment very difficult. Of the 32 properties along North Clinton Avenue which are vacant and unimproved, 14 are in diverse

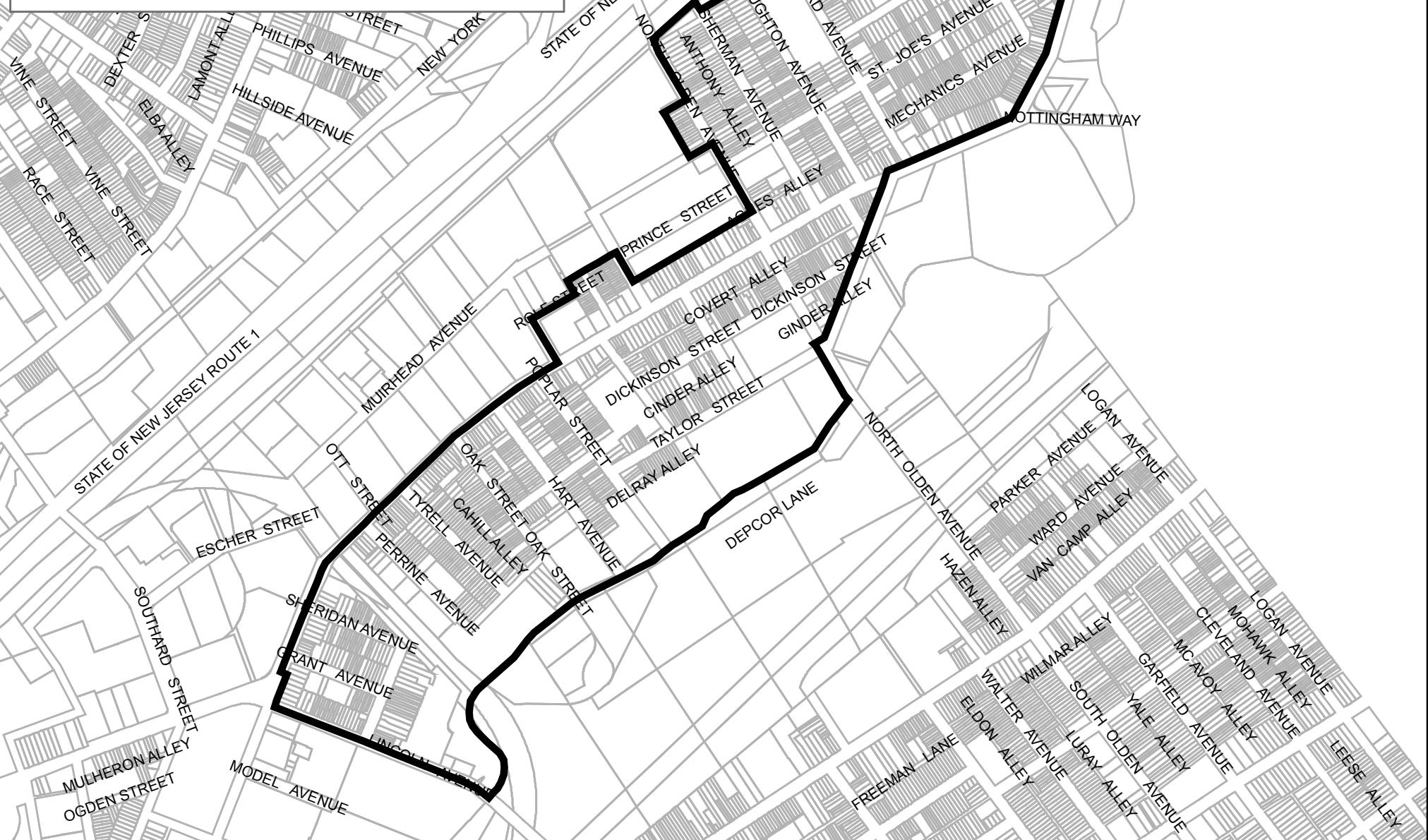
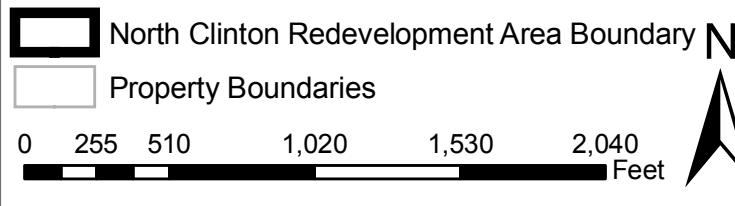
ownership while of the 31 vacant dilapidated structures 16 or over half are in diverse ownership. Most of these properties have lain vacant for up to ten years and have only served to contribute to the deterioration of the corridor. The scattered residential properties as well as the vacant industrial properties to be acquired for rehabilitation and the greenway respectively are also in diverse ownership and would be difficult to acquire in a timely manner without the implementation of the Redevelopment Plan. The redevelopment of these properties will undoubtedly enhance the Project Area by providing a low-income housing resource and a much-needed collection of small service businesses for the adjoining residential neighborhood.

## **CONCLUSION**

It has been shown that the Project Area is an area in need of redevelopment according to conditions: b, c, d & e of the redevelopment law. The Project Area requires concentrated efforts and an overall master plan for the redevelopment of the North Clinton Avenue corridor, the securing of vacant industrial properties fronting the Assunpink along with the maintenance and preservation of a deteriorating housing stock. The development of the Route One Industrial complex and the promotion of the Assunpink Creek Greenway are current efforts to enhance the Project Area however much more needs to be done.

# North Clinton Redevelopment Area

December 1997



## North Clinton Redevelopment Area

December 1997

## Property Boundaries

North Clinton Redevelopment Area Boundary

## Land Use

### Commercial/Residential (C/R)

## Industrial (I)

## Open Space/Parks (OS)

## Residential (R)

N/A

0    250    500    1,000    1,500    2,000    Feet

