

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE TOWNSHIP OF TEANECK  
MASTER PLAN LAND USE ELEMENT FOR BLOCK 5201, LOTS 1 AND 2**

PREPARED FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF TEANECK PLANNING BOARD



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## 2 THE NECESSITY FOR AMENDING TEANECK'S MASTER PLAN

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The subject property, which is also known as 1775 Windsor Road, is located at the extreme northern tip of Teaneck adjacent to the border of Bergenfield Borough (see Figure 1). Lot 1 is a small 0.3 acre vacant parcel located at the corner of Windsor Road and Vesey Street. Lot 2, which consists of approximately 4.93 acres, is improved with the former Givaudan office facility which is presently partially occupied by World of Wings. Lot 2 is bounded to the north and west by the Borough of Bergenfield. The property abuts a Conrail freight rail line to the east. Access to Lot 2 is provided via its frontage along Vesey Street.

As illustrated by the aerial photograph in Figure 2, surrounding land uses include Windsor Park, a municipal park located across Vesey Street to the south of the subject property. Adjacent land uses within Bergenfield include a Pathmark supermarket (to the north) and the Podonamoo Church (to the west). The Podonamoo Church is separated from the subject property by the Hirschfield Brook. The property is physically separated from the single-family residential area to the east by the Conrail rail line. To the west, the subject property is approximately 400 feet from the closest residences located across Windsor Road. The existing grade of the property is slightly below the grade of the Pathmark property and also below the grade of the rail line.

The current zoning of the tract is LI-2, which is mapped solely over the subject property (see Figure 3). Permitted principal uses in the LI-2 zone include general offices, research laboratories, light manufacturing, warehousing and family entertainment. Conditional uses permitted in the LI-2 include automobile service stations, garages, public service installations and wireless towers. The LI-2 zoning was put in place in 2014 to bring the World of Wings use, which was approved as a use variance by the Zoning Board in 2011, into compliance with the zoning.

Historically, the subject property served as a single-user office headquarters facility for Givaudan Raure, a Swiss manufacturer of flavorings and fragrances. The existing facility was constructed in 1972. Following Givaudan's departure from Teaneck in 2009, the property was sold to its current owners, Teaneck Windsor LLC, who repurposed a large portion of the facility for a family entertainment and butterfly exhibit center called World of Wings. World of Wings has not been economically successful and the overall facility remains underutilized. The owners have unsuccessfully marketed the facility for office use for several years. However, the building is over 40 years and is now functionally obsolete for office or industrial purposes.

The challenges related to the reuse of single user office facilities have become a prevalent land use problem throughout the state. In the wake of the Great Recession, a number of planning studies have documented the major challenges posed by the decline of New Jersey's suburban office sector and the





FIGURE 1 | LOCATION OF BLOCK 5201, LOTS 1 AND 2 | TOWNSHIP OF TEANECK NJ





FIGURE 2 | AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF BLOCK 5201, LOTS 1 AND 2 | TOWNSHIP OF TEANECK NJ





FIGURE 3 | CURRENT ZONING OF BLOCK 5201, LOTS 1 AND 2 | TOWNSHIP OF TEANECK NJ

mounting obsolescence of its single-user corporate campus facilities.<sup>1</sup> It is highly unlikely that another office user will be interested in a specialized single-user facility, such as the subject property. Therefore, it is incumbent upon municipalities to consider a wide range of reuse scenarios for vacant and underperforming office properties, including multifamily residential, because the office market has evolved away from the suburban campus model. The World of Wings concept was a unique land use proposal which ultimately failed to bring the subject property back to its full utilization. At this time, it is necessary to reevaluate the zoning of this site to identify a future land use planning scheme that provides an economically viable redevelopment of the property that advances the Township Master Plan's goals and objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see "Reinventing the New Jersey Economy: New Metropolitan and Regional Employment Dynamics," by Hughes, J. and Seneca, J., Rutgers Bloustein School (2012).

### 3 PROPOSED REZONING FOR BLOCK 52.01, LOTS 1 AND 2

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#### 3.1 PLANNING JUSTIFICATION FOR A REZONING TO ALLOW MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE SUBJECT PROPERTY

The subject property is ill suited to achieve the purpose of the LI-2 zone. Most importantly, the subject property is limited in two key factors for viable office development: convenient access and visibility to a major arterial roadway. Consequently, the ability to realize the Township’s vision for the LI-2 zone on the subject property is nonexistent.

The surrounding land uses create an ideal context for a multifamily residential use. In particular, the substantial distance and physical separation from nearby single-family residential areas minimizes the impacts of a potential multifamily use on the property. The adjacent house of worship (Podonamoo Church) and the supermarket are compatible uses, provided that a sufficient setback is provided to the multifamily use. A multifamily development would be the only land use with frontage along Vesey Street, which means that traffic will not impact any of the surrounding residential neighborhoods. In addition, the regular shape and overall size of the tract is suitable for a self-contained multifamily residential community of approximately 250 units.

Meanwhile, there is a major demographic shift underway which is creating tremendous demand for multifamily housing. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that between 2008 and 2020 approximately 57 million members of Gen Y (those born between 1977 and 1994) will reach the age of 22. A large portion of this demographic segment will rent, because a) challenging lending standards are motivating many young households to delay buying their first home; and b) Gen Y has an inherent preference for the flexible and comfortable lifestyle associated with renting in a new upscale community.

Englewood, Fort Lee, Hackensack and other surrounding municipalities are capitalizing on opportunities to redevelop aging commercial and industrial properties for high quality new multifamily housing that provide more diverse quality housing options and generate new tax ratables. As further described below, a rezoning to permit a multifamily residential use would provide the Township with an opportunity to create a well-planned multifamily rental apartment development.

#### 3.2 ADVANCEMENT OF THE TOWNSHIP OF TEANECK MASTER PLAN’S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Township of Teaneck Master Plan was adopted by the Planning Board in 2007. Two Master Plan Reexamination Reports have been prepared since that time. The first, adopted in 2011, recommended several zoning changes related to its non-residential base in recognition of the drastically changed economic environment in the wake of the Great Recession. The changes included the creation of a medical office overlay district, a hotel zone and a new zoning for the intersection of Teaneck Road and Fort Lee Road. In 2014, the Planning Board adopted another Reexamination Report which focused on the property under consideration in this report.



Among the goals expressed in the 2007 Master Plan and repeated in the 2011 and 2014 Master Plan Reexamination Reports was the goal to “provide zoning protection for existing multifamily housing, and encourage its expansion only in areas where it would not have detrimental effects on single-family residential neighborhoods.” As described above, the subject property is particularly suitable for multifamily housing because it is completely separated from the single-family neighborhoods in its vicinity. Consequently, a multifamily use will not create any land use, visual, traffic or other detrimental impacts on existing neighborhoods.

The 2007 Master Plan also anticipated the opportunity to redevelop some of the Township’s aging non-residential properties with new multifamily residential uses:

As a mature suburban community, additional residential development will likely be accommodated by redevelopment or infill opportunities. Opportunities for new multi-family development exist above retail stores in all of the four (4) business districts. Other marginal or underutilized parcels, many of which are industrial or commercial in nature may present themselves as opportunities for redevelopment in the near future. The highest and best use for such parcels may be multifamily residential development, owing to the high demand for new housing in Teaneck. At first glance such projects may appear to have several advantages meeting the housing needs of Teaneck’s growing younger population, providing ratables and improving the area’s overall aesthetics. However, any decision to introduce higher density development needs to be weighed against overall trends and implications and impact to the community as a whole.” (p. 25)

Along the lines of the above, the 2011 and 2014 Master Plan Reexamination Reports emphasized that “the decrease in the Township’s non-residential tax ratable base indicated in the 2007 Master Plan remains a substantive issue in Teaneck where the tax burden increasingly falls on the shoulders of the residential taxpayer. Furthermore, the trend is intensified by the dwindling availability of vacant land in the Township, particularly land which can be assembled for a development.” Both reports go on to conclude that “because of the decline in municipal revenues and state aid, there is an even greater need today to identify opportunities for the private market to develop vacant sites or redevelop marginal or underutilized sites to increase the Township’s tax ratable base.”

A multifamily housing use of the subject property has the potential to address the fiscal concerns expressed in the prior Master Plan documentation. Self-contained apartment communities require very limited municipal services. In particular, the number of public school children generated by such communities is drastically lower than single-family, townhouse or garden apartment dwellings. According to a study of 1,700 new mid-rise apartment units in northern New Jersey owned by Avalon Bay, approximately one public school child is generated by every 19 or 20 units. Consequently, in reference to the above Master Plan policy statements, a well-planned multifamily housing use will create a positive fiscal impact on the municipality.

In addition, a multifamily use with an inclusionary affordable housing component would advance Objective #7 of the Land Use Plan Element which seeks to “provide for the Township’s fair share of affordable housing.”

In summary, a rezoning to facilitate a multifamily residential redevelopment of the former Givaudan facility would advance several of the Township’s Master Plan goals and objectives related to the revitalization of underperforming industrial and commercial properties and the accommodation of new multifamily housing uses in appropriate locations and in a manner which does not negatively impact the character of existing residential neighborhoods or the fiscal health of the community.

### 3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROPOSED REZONING OF BLOCK 5201, LOTS 1 AND 2

A new zone district is recommended for Block 5201, Lots 1 and 2 to facilitate a multifamily residential use. The Township currently has a R-M (Residential – Multifamily) zone. As illustrated in Figure 4, a second multifamily zone – which might be called R-M2 (Residential – Multifamily 2) should be created to permit multifamily dwellings and customary accessory uses. The overall yield of development should be limited to 250 units. The recommended bulk requirements for the R-M2 are set forth below.





FIGURE 4 | PROPOSED ZONING OF BLOCK 5201, LOTS 1 AND 2 | TOWNSHIP OF TEANECK NJ

<b>TYPE</b>	<b>MINIMUM REQUIREMENT</b>
Lot size	5 acres
Lot width	250 feet
Building setbacks	
- Front	20 feet
- One side	10 feet
- Both sides	25 feet
- Rear	35 feet
Driveway setbacks	
- To property line	0 feet
- To building	5 feet
Parking setbacks (surface)	
- To property line	0 feet
- To building	5 feet
Open space	
- Surface open space	15% of lot area
- Total open space (including roof gardens)	30% of lot area
	<b>MAXIMUM REQUIREMENTS</b>
Building coverage	50% of lot area
Impervious coverage	70% of lot area
Floor Area Ratio	1.5
Building Height	
- Stories	5 stories
- Feet	70 feet
Garage Height	
- Feet	70 feet



Additional items that should be addressed include:

- *Design standards:* The area will remain subject to the other standards of the Township of Teaneck Municipal Code, including the site design standards set forth in Section 33-18 as well as the signs, off-street parking, fences and other related standards set forth in Sections 33-27 to 29.
- *Affordable housing:* It is recommended that a minimum of 10% of the units will be designated for low- and moderate-income families in accordance with Uniform Housing Affordability Controls (UHAC) in terms of unit type distribution and income requirements. Alternatively, a payment in lieu of providing affordable housing may also be utilized. A figure of \$30,000 per low and moderate income housing unit, based upon 10% of the total units provided is recommended for this option.
- *Parking requirement:* While the zoning must technically comply with the statewide parking requirements of the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS), it is likely that a new multifamily use will demand a much smaller supply of off-street parking spaces. It should be noted that the RSIS parking requirements were developed based on statewide auto ownership data from the 1990 US Census. In reality, the occupants of new multifamily residential developments in the New York Metropolitan Area have much lower parking demands than garden apartments in more outer suburban or rural contexts. The Planning Board should consider allowing an exception from RSIS to require a minimum of 1.75 parking spaces per unit.

## 4 CONCLUSION

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The Amendment to the Land Use Element of the Township of Teaneck described in the foregoing chapters considered the future development of Block 5021, Lots 1 and 2. An amendment is necessary to develop a new zoning scheme for the former Givaudan headquarters which is currently utilized by the World of Wings. Based on the locational and surrounding land use characteristics of the subject property, it was determined that a multifamily residential use is appropriate for the site. By the same token, the current LI-2 zoning which encourages office development is ill-suited for the property. A redevelopment of the site for multifamily housing would advance a number of goals and objectives of the Teaneck Master Plan. The creation of a new multifamily zone based on the planning framework introduced in the preceding chapter is strongly recommended.