

**RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING THE FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW BY THE MONTCLAIR TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING LAW AND THE BOARD’S RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MONTCLAIR TOWNSHIP COUNCIL REGARDING AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP CONCERNING THE “LACKAWANNA PLAZA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN” DATED OCTOBER 2022**

**WHEREAS**, on December 20, 2022, the Municipal Council of the Township of Montclair (“Council”) introduced ordinance 0-22-29, “Ordinance to Approve the [October 2022] Redevelopment Plan for Lackawanna Plaza in the Township of Montclair” (the “Redevelopment Plan”). Pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7e, the Council referred the Redevelopment Plan to the Montclair Township Planning Board (“Board”), among other things, for a report of its recommendation to include identification of any of the Redevelopment Plan’s provisions which are inconsistent with the master plan, recommendations concerning the identified inconsistencies, and any other matters the Board deemed appropriate. The Board’s review of the Redevelopment Plan considered the May 2015 Master Plan as amended April 24, 2017 (the “Master Plan”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Council’s referral to the Board noted that in designating Lackawanna Plaza as an area in need of redevelopment, the intent was to “stimulate private investment, increase parking capacity, create more affordable housing, create open space/public art locations, renovate deteriorated properties, and attract quality businesses.” The Council referral explained that the Redevelopment Plan was further designed to achieve the Master Plan goals for the Lackawanna Plaza area. Most significantly among those goals was the “balancing of preservation of the historic Lackawanna train station with providing a new state of the art supermarket”; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board fully supports the goal of a broad scale, well-designed, mixed-use development at Lackawanna Plaza and commends the Council for its insistence that any Lackawanna Plaza project include needed features like a large percentage of affordable housing, an economically viable supermarket and public spaces; and

**WHEREAS**, a primary issue considered by the Board was not whether to undertake significant redevelopment of one of Montclair’s potentially most transformative locations; rather, the Board’s consideration focused on what development may the site reasonably accommodate in keeping with the goals of the Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, at the Board’s January 23, 2023 regular meeting, the Board conducted a continuing review of the Redevelopment Plan. Although the Board agreed that the Redevelopment Plan comports with certain broad goals of the Master Plan that match the Council’s intent when it designated Lackawanna Plaza as an area in need of redevelopment, the Redevelopment Plan, as currently proposed, is substantially inconsistent with the Master Plan’s provisions in regard to building size and harmony with the surrounding neighborhoods. For that reason, the Board strongly recommends that the Redevelopment Plan not be adopted until the Council considers the results of expert studies and the recommendations of the Board.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Planning Board of the Township of Montclair, County of Essex, State of New Jersey, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January, that the Board has reviewed the Redevelopment Plan and has determined it to be substantially inconsistent with the Master Plan. The Board therefore cannot recommend the Council’s adoption of the Redevelopment Plan but suggests further evaluation in light of the following findings and recommendations:

**FINDING 1 – HEIGHT:** The buildings as proposed in the Redevelopment Plan significantly exceed Master Plan height restrictions and are out of scale, character and scope with the surrounding neighborhood.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Current Zoning Heights:** In the view of the Board, for the Redevelopment Plan to conform with the Master Plan’s guidance and to better align the Redevelopment Plan with the existing development along Glenridge and Bloomfield Avenues, the Board recommends that the Redevelopment Plan be amended to require building heights that conform more closely to current zoning. The Board believes the efforts made to set back and step back the development from the street reduces the impact of building height on the surrounding neighborhood in a positive way and is in keeping with the Master Plan’s spirit and letter, but do not go far enough. (For this recommendation, the Board considered setbacks as the distance of a building facade from the sidewalk; stepbacks are the portions of a building above certain heights which are further pushed-in towards the center of the building, as a wedding cake has smaller layers as the height increases.) To keep with the Master Plan’s goals, maximum heights should be limited to locations furthest from the street frontage.

- ***Glenridge Avenue:*** Where building heights and the Master Plan are most in conflict is along the Glenridge Avenue street frontage. The Master Plan categorizes Glenridge Avenue as part of the **C-3 Zone**, which restricts building heights to a maximum 37 feet. To be consistent with the Master Plan, the Board recommends that the new proposed buildings with Glenridge Avenue frontages conform to this 37-foot height restriction for the first 100 feet of depth from Glenridge Avenue. After that first 100 feet of depth, heights may then increase with appropriate setbacks and stepbacks. If the Council follows this recommendation, the height adjustment would harmonize the full length of Glenridge Avenue with a maximum 37 foot building height.
- ***Bloomfield Avenue:*** The Master Plan categorizes Bloomfield Avenue as part of the **C-1 Zone**, which restricts building heights to a maximum 67 feet. (We note that public discussion of the Bloomfield Avenue-frontage buildings in the Redevelopment Plan has focused on the number of stories the proposed buildings would include, rather than their actual height, but it is the height that matters.) To be consistent with the Master Plan, the Board recommends that proposed buildings with Bloomfield Avenue frontages should conform to the C-1 Zone height restrictions. Unlike the Glenridge Avenue frontage, as to which the Board recommends a 100 foot buffer zone from the street before heights may exceed the current Master Plan maximums, the Board is not providing a specific recommendation as to how far back from Bloomfield Avenue the 67-foot maximum should be maintained before the proposed buildings may exceed that current maximum, if accompanied by appropriate setbacks and stepbacks.

**Mechanical Equipment/Water Towers:** The Redevelopment Plan potentially allows mechanical equipment, water towers, etc., to increase building heights further and to allow these unattractive features to be visible from multiple angles. The Board recommends adding to the Redevelopment Plan requirements that the redeveloper must minimize the visual impact of upper stories, including steps to reduce the visibility of mechanical equipment, water towers, and similar features. Ideally, these unattractive rooftop features should not be visible at all from sidewalks of adjoining streets. Further, the Board recommends that the Council take into account the added height of these features when setting maximum heights for the proposed buildings overall.

**Shadows:** Although the Redevelopment Plan’s consultants provided some guidance with respect to sightlines, no information was provided to demonstrate what a passerby would see from certain

vantage points once the proposed buildings are built or that would allow a determination whether these new buildings, when constructed, would leave current residents in shadows when, at present, their properties are exposed to the sun. The Board recommends that the Council require the consultants to study the impact of shadows on current residents. If this study demonstrates that the shadow impact of the new buildings would be substantial, the Council should consider requiring further changes to building design, including enhanced setbacks and stepbacks, and potentially reduced building heights, to lessen this impact.

**FINDING 2 - BULK:** The proposed buildings are excessively large for the area and threaten to overwhelm the surrounding low-rise neighborhood.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

If the Council adopts the Board's recommendations with regard to building height, these changes likely would address its related concerns with respect to bulk.

**FINDING 3 - DENSITY:** The Redevelopment Plan as currently drafted conforms to the Master Plan's C-1 zoning density limit of 55 units per acre. Density should be reevaluated, however, to consider the height and bulk adjustments recommended by the Board.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

If the Council adopts the Board's recommendations with regard to building heights, this likely would impact the number of residential units that the site can accommodate because the calculation of office, retail and residential space is a function of building form. Considering the required street level uses (active retail stores, driveways, lobbies, park entrance, etc.) and minimum office space stated in the Redevelopment Plan, density can only be determined after height and bulk concerns are resolved.

The number of residential units must include a balanced mix of studio, one, two and three bedroom units to avoid packing the project with smaller units not desired by the community.

**FINDING 4 - PARKING AND TRAFFIC IMPACTS:** During its Redevelopment Plan review, the Board determined that existing Traffic and Parking analyses did not adequately address the Board's concerns about the possible impact on traffic and circulation in the area of Lackawanna Plaza. The traffic study, provided to the Board by the redeveloper's engineer used 2017 traffic figures as the basis of comparison with March 2022 figures, to show a decrease in traffic. The Board is concerned that the March 2022 figures still reflect pandemic-impact driving patterns and that the 2017 figures do not adequately account for recent development both in Montclair and surrounding communities served by the Bloomfield Avenue corridor. Additionally, during the Board's Redevelopment Plan review, the Board determined that existing Traffic and Parking studies are out of date and/or based on out-of-date standards. The assumptions built into the proposed "shared parking" arrangements, for example, about the percentage of apartment dwellers who will drive their cars away from their homes during all weekday business hours are based on a document posted to a New Jersey state website more than 20 years ago and which itself was based on an Australian study conducted at an unknown earlier date. The Board strongly suspects that the car usage assumptions underlying these documents are not in keeping with present work and transportation patterns.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**New Studies Required:** Given the high cost of constructing deck parking spaces, and a desire to maximize the amenities of the Lackawanna Plaza development, the Board suggests gathering as much usable data as possible to ensure that we insist on neither too many nor too few parking spots at the site and that an emphasis be placed on collecting local actual use data from all the recent developments in and around the town.

The shared parking assumptions must be reexamined to determine COVID's impact on commuting habits. It should be possible for parking consultants to obtain actual, present-day data from local properties like Valley & Bloom, the Siena and Seymour Street about the percentage of cars that vacate their spots during each weekday's business hours. Specific work-from-home patterns (such as 3 days in office) which contribute to lower office populations on Fridays and Mondays mean we should not rely solely on single day of the week studies. Without this current data, the Council cannot make reasonable assumptions about the number of parking spaces reserved for residents' evening and weekend needs that may be vacant for use by supermarket customers or patrons of other commercial tenants. Because the minimum office space requirement was intended to support the function of shared parking, it too must be reevaluated (and perhaps not be a requirement of the Redevelopment Plan, but rather a suggestion).

The Board believes that insufficient consideration has been given to where the proposed supermarket will be placed, how customers of the supermarket will enter and exit the site, and whether what are perceived as inconveniences by supermarket patrons will influence the long-term viability of the supermarket. We recommend that the Council receive independent guidance with respect to this concern from appropriate experts before approving the Redevelopment Plan.

**Breakpoints:** The Redevelopment Plan must establish traffic impact breakpoints to ensure that the proposed Redevelopment Plan does not substantially impede traffic flow on the critical Bloomfield Avenue traffic corridor or overburden the intersections at Bloomfield Avenue/Grove Street/Elm Street and Bloomfield Avenue/Greenwood Avenue/Gates Avenue. The Master Plan seeks to ensure adequate circulation and traffic flow. If service degrades to Level E or worse, the Board believes the subsequent negative circulation impacts will outweigh the benefits of redevelopment.

**Local streets:** The Redevelopment Plan must establish that local residential streets will not become alternative traffic conduits to avoid overburdened main traffic roadways. Truck traffic, in particular, must be critically viewed.

**FINDING 5 – HOUSING PLAN:** The number of affordable and workforce housing units, 20% and 10% respectively, conforms to Master Plan Requirements.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Redevelopment Plan should affirmatively state that affordable and workforce housing preference must be given to Montclair residents.

The Redevelopment Plan should include language ensuring that affordable housing and workforce tenants will not be charged additional fees for parking and amenities.

**FINDING 6 – CONSERVATION PLAN/INFRASTRUCTURE:** The Redevelopment Plan appears consistent with the Conservation Plan Element of the Master Plan with respect to impervious surfaces, open space, LEED requirements and transportation. Importantly, however, the Redevelopment Plan does not provide sufficient data to determine whether what it proposes with

respect to utility use and stormwater management actually can succeed. Further information is required to determine Master Plan consistency with respect to Traffic, Fiscal Impact, Utility Impact, and Stormwater Management. The Board strongly recommends that the Council obtain impact studies with respect to utility usage and stormwater management prior to approving the Redevelopment Plan. The Council can only consider whether the benefits outweigh the Redevelopment Plan's impacts if it understands whether the proposed redevelopment will have harmful effects on the Township's environment and infrastructure.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Stormwater/Drainage/Etc.:** The Redevelopment Plan includes a requirement that the existing culverts that traverse the property be inspected and expanded and/or reinforced, if necessary, to ensure adequate flows. In addition, the redevelopment project will require the design of new stormwater facilities that will alleviate stormwater from the property and reduce potential flooding. The Board highly recommends that the Council obtain engineering reports, including the Redevelopment Plan impact on drainage and culverts prior to Redevelopment Plan approval to ensure that there will be unimpeded drainage flow through the site.

**Toney's Brook:** The extent to which Toney's Brook impacts the site may significantly hinder stormwater management, cause significant flooding on the site and surrounding area, and/or limit the scale and scope of buildings that the site can support. This potential impact needs to be addressed in an engineering study.

**FINDING 7 – FORM AND CHARACTER:** The Master Plan states the following as a Township Goal: "Encourage public realm and private development that maintains the scale and character inherent in the diverse and historic neighborhoods of the Township." The buildings as proposed in the Redevelopment Plan are out of scale and scope with respect to the surrounding area. The buildings not only impact, but change the character of, the neighborhood, turning a traditionally low-rise commercial district into a major metropolitan center.

It is notable that the Redevelopment Plan consultants stated to the Board that this development would create a "new neighborhood." Indeed, the plan design appears to cut out and form a barrier to the adjacent neighborhoods; this perception is not limited to just the outsized scale and mass of the proposed structures. The surrounding neighborhoods are low- to moderate-income. The Master Plan's goal of a diverse range of housing options is addressed via the Redevelopment Plan's incorporation of 20% affordable and 10% workforce housing. This alone will not ensure the continued sustainability of the current economic diversity of the neighborhood; conforming to the Master Plan will require continued, vigorous efforts to protect the affordable housing options in the neighborhood.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Reducing the height and bulk, as recommended in this Resolution's findings, will help integrate the Redevelopment Plan into the surrounding residential neighborhoods and commercial center. On page 68 of the Master Plan, Community Identified Issue 8 states: "[g]rowth in Montclair Center could be beneficial, but this must be done without adversely affecting the characteristics of place that are important to the community."

The historic train station is inherently connected and is, in fact, the defining feature of the Bloomfield Avenue Downtown Historic District. The Redevelopment Plan must respect that new construction

should integrate, highlight and complement existing character, not overwhelm its storied history to the point that the site becomes unrecognizable.

**FINDING 8 - OPEN SPACE:** Twenty percent (20%) open space may not be an adequate tradeoff for increased height, bulk and density.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Master Plan contemplates height, bulk, and density credits where a developer provides public benefits. In exchange for building heights far in excess of current zoning restrictions, additional public space should be required in the Redevelopment Plan. Proposed heights on two of the buildings, even before considering rooftop equipment, exceed zoning restrictions by nearly 20 feet.

The Redevelopment Plan purportedly contains 20% open space, but the Redevelopment Plan does not expressly state how that percentage is calculated. The Redevelopment Plan, for example, should not credit the open space afforded by the following elements:

1. **The Arts Park** between Grove Street and Buildings D and E is apparently the result of an Essex County easement. The redeveloper should not receive credit for providing open space when the redeveloper literally has no choice but to leave particular space “open.” Further, the Council should obtain confirmation from Essex County that there are no restrictions to the development as described in the Redevelopment Plan.
2. **The Station Plaza** displays reclaimed elements of the historic train station that may be relocated but are required by the Redevelopment Plan to be placed on the site. This Station Plaza would, in effect, receive credit for providing unencumbered open space when, in reality, this plaza fulfills the redeveloper’s separate obligation to protect historic resources. The redeveloper should not receive two forms of credit for the same benefit.
3. **The horseshoe driveway/parking area** in the Main Plaza compromises the open plaza and reduces its accessibility for public use. Though the driveway does not provide access to any parking garage, visitors may mistake this driveway for a Bloomfield Avenue entrance to the supermarket, potentially generating a steady traffic flow mistakenly entering and then exiting the horseshoe driveway.

**Full-time Public Space:** All public space in the Redevelopment Plan shall be considered full-time public space. The council should establish clear guidelines allowing for public usage and ensure that rules and regulations are liberally interpreted in favor of public access.

**Recreational/Playground Area:** Open space between Buildings D and E should incorporate recreational area for public use, including a playground.

**Connection to Crane Park:** Page 75 of the Master Plan states that "Crane Park, located at the corner of Glenridge Avenue and Lackawanna Plaza, provides an attractive gathering space and focal point for this area." The Redevelopment Plan should include green space that connects Crane Park to the historic railway station and capitalizes on the opportunity to encourage pedestrian activity between Bloomfield Avenue and Glenridge Avenue.

**Community Center:** The former supermarket and mall acted as an indoor community center for people in the neighborhood. Consideration should be given to the creation of indoor community space as a public benefit.

**Public Restroom:** A public restroom should be provided in the public open space area with clear and enforced hours of operation.

**FINDING 9 - HISTORIC PRESERVATION:** The Redevelopment Plan does not provide sufficient protection for Historic Resources that have defined the Lackawanna Plaza for over a century. Historic Resource protections contemplated by the Redevelopment Plan fail to conform to the Master Plan. The Board urges the Council to carefully consider the recommendations in the report it receives from the Historic Preservation Commission. The Board makes the following recommendations:

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Redevelopment Plan contemplates the demolition of historic elements and viewshed of a site that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the New Jersey Register of Historic sites, and is a locally designated landmark. The Board recommends that the Council obtain a legal opinion as to whether an application is required or recommended to be filed with the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office to determine if a Redevelopment Plan may allow for the demolition of a property or part of a property that is listed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places in the absence of State authorization.

**Historic elements SHALL be protected:** The Redevelopment Plan must state that historic elements SHALL be preserved, NOT that historic elements SHOULD be preserved.

**Clause V.A.1:** Clause V.A.1 appears to allow the redeveloper leeway to demolish elements not specified in the Redevelopment Plan if deemed dilapidated, deteriorated, etc. Any such demolition proposed for historic resources must require Historic Preservation Commission oversight.

**Stanchions:** The Redevelopment Plan proposes moving several stanchions but has not yet defined which stanchions will be moved and for what purpose. All reasonable efforts must be made to keep stanchions in their original location to avoid losing the context of the historical sheds that defined the track waiting areas.

**Building A:** Renderings of Building A seem to show that it dwarfs the train station and appears to require the demolition of the Head of the Tracks structure, an original historical element of the waiting room that must be protected by the Redevelopment Plan. Building A also appears to directly abut the northern front of the Historic Waiting Area. This is problematic for at least two reasons: Waiting room sightlines should remain unobstructed on all sides and such construction threatens to damage a key historic resource.

The Redevelopment Plan states that the Historic Waiting Area will act as a lobby for Building A. The owner of Pineapple Express believes their business will go on unimpeded by construction. Has the business been informed of this proposed use?

The use as an office lobby is inappropriate as it completely subordinates the historic resource -- the defining structure of the site -- to what appears to be generic new construction. The historic resource should be a centerpiece of this design, not swallowed whole and utterly diminished by this proposed project.

The Building A section that abuts the Historic Waiting Room also appears to be a completely utilitarian parking garage, and no efforts have been made to diminish Building A's impact on the historic resource. The Board's view is that the design must be reconsidered to maintain consistency with the Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan.

**FINDING 10 – SUPERMARKET:** Long-term viability of a supermarket is paramount to the success of the Redevelopment Plan. The Redevelopment Plan does not provide sufficient information to determine the long-term viability of a supermarket. (Note: The Board received a Certification from an attorney representing BDP Holding LLC stating that there is an executed lease between BDP and a supermarket. The Council may wish to review this lease.)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Definition:** For purposes of the Redevelopment Plan we assume that, by “State-of-the-Art Supermarket,” the Council intended to ensure construction of a large, self-service, retail establishment selling a wide variety of food products, including fresh meats, fresh produce, and name brand prepackaged items, as well as other convenience and household goods. We note, however, that the Redevelopment Plan does not actually define what kind of supermarket the Council expects to be built. A definition should be added to the Redevelopment Plan. During Board deliberations, we noted the difference between a “grocery store,” which Board members unanimously considered not to be sufficient for the site, and a true “supermarket.”

**Viability:** The site design must contribute to the viability of the supermarket taking into account, among other considerations, visibility, ease of access, variety of offerings, and cost of parking. The Board is deeply concerned that the currently contemplated location for the supermarket within the Redevelopment Plan could hinder or even prove fatal to its long-term viability. The Board believes the supermarket must not only be clearly visible from Bloomfield Avenue but it must also be accessible from Bloomfield Avenue. In the currently contemplated design, the supermarket is not accessible from Bloomfield Avenue and its visibility from Bloomfield Avenue is in doubt. The Council's pending Ordinance approving the Redevelopment Plan states that a lack of visibility from Bloomfield Avenue contributed to the failure of the 1980's era development. The Redevelopment Plan, in its current iteration, has not resolved that issue.

**Size:** The Redevelopment Plan is silent on the proposed size of the supermarket. During its review, some Board members suggested a minimum of 50,000 s.f.; others supported a range between 40,000 s.f. and 50,000 s.f. The consensus of the Board was that the Redevelopment Plan should state that the supermarket size should be no less than the average size of supermarkets in New Jersey as determined by industry data.

**Alternate Site:** In the view of the Board, the current location of the TD Bank would be preferable as the supermarket site. This location would provide superior visibility and access as well as hybrid ground floor surface parking and the first floor of a parking deck. (Note: This property was not owned by the developer when the Board reviewed the 2017 site plan application.) Relocating the supermarket to the East Lot would also provide unobstructed sightlines from a commercial street (Bloomfield Avenue) and would ensure that the store was not hidden away or partially blocked by Building C.

**Parking Deck/Escalators:** As currently designed, the supermarket would rely on a parking deck and escalators rather than easy first-floor access by those who drive to the supermarket. The currently anonymous lessee of the supermarket space may well possess information about local consumers'



willingness to shop in a supermarket with these features, but no such evidence has been presented publicly. The Board is concerned that a supermarket relying on a parking deck and escalators -- beyond the problems that might be caused by mechanical failures -- will hinder its long-term viability.

**First Building Built:** The Redevelopment Plan must affirmatively state that the supermarket will be the first building constructed and that the redeveloper will facilitate the earliest practicable opening of the supermarket, even while other features of the Lackawanna Plaza redevelopment continue to be constructed.

**Traffic Impacts:** The Board reiterates its belief that how traffic impacts are addressed and mitigated weighs heavily on whether the Redevelopment Plan will adversely affect the community. The Board is not expressing an opinion as to the size of the supermarket and the services it should provide, but the Board notes that when the time comes to conduct a site plan review, the size and occupancy of the site will impact traffic flow and parking requirements. The Council should bear this in mind when deciding whether to include minimum/maximum square footage requirements for the supermarket.

**FINDING 11 – OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE AND SAFETY:** The Master Plan states that “Quality of life in quiet residential neighborhoods is an amenity that defines the character of our Township.” The Redevelopment Plan may negatively impact surrounding neighborhood quality of life and safety.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Heights:** The construction of 5 towers ranging in height from 75 to 89 feet in a commercial zone surrounded by several residential neighborhoods will significantly impact the quality of life for neighborhood residents.

**Traffic:** While the Board was not provided a traffic study from the Board’s traffic engineering professional, common sense informs that the amount of traffic generated by this site will be substantial. Thus, pedestrian safety, the safety of nearby school children, the noise and air pollution, general area congestion, parking and driving spillover onto neighborhood streets and other considerations could adversely affect the quality of life in the adjoining neighborhoods as well as neighborhoods that radiate out further from the site.

**FINDING 12 – OVERALL ECONOMIC IMPACT:** Both positive and negative impacts of the Redevelopment Plan project must be studied. More information is required to determine the Redevelopment Plan’s overall economic impact and its compliance with the Master Plan’s guidance.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Additional data is required to understand the benefits and/or negative effects of abandoning the current zoning for changes permitted in the Redevelopment Plan, including the impact to municipal services, schools, surrounding businesses, and other relevant economic data. Page 3 of the Master Plan states that Zoning Code modifications should be accompanied by “appropriate economic, infrastructure and other similar research to delineate the impacts of the specific code modifications under consideration in order to better inform and improve data-based decision-making concerning such modifications and their anticipated benefits.” Page 54 of the Master Plan states that “The economic impacts of new development include the costs of municipal services, educating additional schoolchildren and the cost of improving and maintaining aging infrastructure.”

This Redevelopment Plan will negate the current zoning therefore to adequately address its impacts and compliance with the Master Plan, appropriate economic, infrastructure and other similar research should be undertaken by the Council.

**Schools:** Referencing a multifamily home study that found such developments presented minimal impact on the Montclair schools, at p. 55 the Master Plan warns on that “[t]he Township . . . should not rely only on this analysis and should continue to revisit these statistics on a periodic basis to evaluate how changes both inside and outside the Township may impact these numbers. Larger development projects should be required to submit an economic impact analysis so that the impacts of development can be evaluated as conditions change.” Considering recent developments up and down the Bloomfield Avenue corridor, including Valley & Bloom, Seymour Street, the Siena, and other projects, additional impact studies with respect to schools are appropriate and warranted.

## **OTHER COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS;**

**1. Short-Term Rentals clarifications:** The Board recognizes the value that having a limited number of short-term rentals may provide. However, the Redevelopment Plan is silent about certain aspects of the proposal for short-term rentals that could benefit from greater clarity. Specifically, is it the Council’s intention that these units operate like an extended-stay hotel or an Airbnb? Is it the Council’s intention to require certain amenities for short-term tenants (*i.e.*, the page 21 use of “shall” with respect to amenities)? Does the Council see the inequity in allowing an Airbnb in a corporate venture but prohibiting small property owners from this use of their homes as our ordinances currently restrict?

**2. Bicycles:** The Redevelopment Plan should designate abundant, secure parking areas for bicycles, make efforts to maximize available rack space and provide protected bike lanes.

- a. **Bicycle Parking for Tenants:** The Redevelopment Plan should include more bicycle parking for tenants. The requirement of 1 bicycle parking space for every 10 units is not enough and should be increased. There should be a minimum ratio of bicycle parking for the office use (p. 29).
- b. **Bicycle Parking for Service Workers:** Among the largest users of bikes in Montclair are service workers at our shops and restaurants. Accordingly, bike parking should be strategically located near high traffic areas that are convenient to these establishments in the Plaza.
- c. **Essex-Hudson Greenway:** Not only will additional bicycle racks benefit Redevelopment Plan residents, but approval of the Essex-Hudson Greenway will generate new bicycle traffic to the downtown. Additional bicycle racks, especially in the open space areas, will provide parking for a potential influx of patrons to our local businesses.
- d. **Glenridge Avenue Bike Lane:** Clarify that the bike lane along Glenridge Ave shall be a protected bike lane (possibly adding a reference to a definition of “protected bike lane”). The Redevelopment Plan should require the installation of removable bollards to prevent drivers from parking in the bike lane and to protect cyclists.
- e. **Additional non-car access:** The Master Plan repeatedly calls for increasing access to our major transit stops and community resources such as the downtown business district by those who travel by foot or bike. Accommodations should be made to provide protected bicycle parking to those who take the bus at Lackawanna Plaza. Protected bike lanes on Grove Street and Lackawanna Plaza should also be built to ensure that individuals have safe routes to their transit stations. All streetscape changes should be in compliance with the Township’s adopted SAFE Streets plan.
- f. **Bike Lane to Bay Street:** Consideration should be given to ensuring the bike lanes as built will easily incorporate into a broader network of micro mobility corridors.

**3. Transit Access:** The Redevelopment Plan’s lack of serious consideration of the needs and desires of the users of the bus stop on the plaza is disappointing and it should be amended.

The Redevelopment Plan should require that the bus stop should be refurbished and include lighting, protection from the elements and a heating mechanism for winter use.

#### **4. Master Plan, page 3, “Big Ideas”;**

a. “Direct future growth and development to transit-oriented, mixed-use nodes within the Township”. In the 8 years since the Master Plan was finalized, five large projects have been completed: Valley and Bloom (2016), Montclarion II (2017), The Vestry (2020), Seymour Street (2021) and Baldwin Street Glen Ridge (2021), adding a total of **658** units to the Bay Street transit node. Additional development in the area, approved but not yet completed, include: 10 Elm Street; The Rose Aire Building at the northeast corner of Glenridge Avenue and North Willow Street; 6 Gates Avenue; and the Diva Lounge building. Have we reached the saturation point with respect to large scale development in the Bay Street Station area? Should any future growth and development be directed to the other 5 train stations in town? These questions need to be addressed.

b. “Maximize mobility assets to make it easier for residents and visitors to walk, bike, park, and ride transit throughout the Township.” The Redevelopment Plan does seem to enable pedestrians to walk easily through all areas of the site. We have no information yet that supports ease of parking or even whether there will be adequate parking on-site. The potential exists for overflow parking to impact the neighboring streets. We do not see any contemplated enhancements to public transport. A bike lane on Glenridge Avenue that doesn’t currently connect to any other lanes seems to be money not well spent. In addition, the placement of this bike lane could be at the most trafficked part of the Redevelopment Plan: At the convergence of where trucks will be entering the loading area, where cars using the parking deck will enter, where people park at the Post Office, retail storefronts, etc. We can support bike lanes in town but wouldn’t a lane on a cross-town street that would get bikers from a significant Point A to a significant Point B be more practical?

5. The placement of Building C should be reconsidered to allow for better sight lines to the supermarket, located in Building A, and to prevent obstructing the views of the stanchions in context with the Historic Waiting Area.

6. Setbacks/stepbacks must be increased along the eastern side of Grove Street to accommodate the Linear Arts Plaza and setbacks/stepbacks should be included for the east side of Building D.

7. While trash and recycling rooms along a façade should include glazing, the trash and recycling should not be visible to passersby (p. 33).

8. A mail room should not be considered an active use for a frontage (p. 34).

9. The Historic Waiting Area will be the lobby for Building A. As this is a public benefit, the Redevelopment Plan should stipulate when the lobby will be open to the public and how it can be used. The Redevelopment Plan should also stipulate that both the interior and exterior walls of the Historic Waiting Area should be preserved since it is an important historic feature.

10. Do we need “one residence per building for a maintenance or supervisory employee” as a permitted accessory use (p. 22)? A residence in a residential building would already be covered as a permitted use. Further, why put residences in commercial buildings?

11. The Redevelopment Plan should affirmatively state that valet parking plan personnel shall be prohibited from using public streets.

12. The Redevelopment Plan should include a requirement that the parking decks be designed with higher floor plates and flat levels so that they can be more easily converted to a non-parking use in the future.
13. Does the Fire Department have sufficient equipment to service buildings at the proposed heights? Will municipal trash collection be impacted?
14. What additional amenities should we request in exchange for height/bulk/density credits?

Resolution adopted on January 23, 2023.

  
JOHN THOMAS WYNN, Chair

RECORD OF PLANNING BOARD VOTE				
Name	Movant	Second	Yes	No
Keith Brodock, Vice Chair			X	
Michael Graham			X	
Anthony Ianuale				X
Carmel Loughman		X	X	
Kevin Ortiz			X	
Kevin Pierre, Mayor's Designee			X	
Robin Schlager, Councilor			X	
Carole Willis			X	
John Wynn, Chair	X		X	