

The logo for Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC, consisting of the letters 'WRT' in white on a red circular background.

November 7, 2005



# Centerville Neighborhood Strategic Plan

prepared by

**Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC** with George Henry George Associates,  
Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., Orth-Rodgers & Associates, Inc.





## Table of Contents

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction and Background</b>	
1.1	Purpose for a Neighborhood Plan	3
1.2	FutureCamden 2002: A Comprehensive Master Plan	3
1.3	Neighborhood Planning Process	7
1.4	Organization of the Plan Document	9
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Centerville Profile</b>	
2.1	Regional Setting	11
2.2	History of the Neighborhood	12
2.3	Population	13
2.4	Land Use	14
2.5	Housing	15
2.6	Economy	15
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Neighborhood Trends Analysis</b>	
3.1	Current Redevelopment	17
3.2	Proposed Revitalization	19
3.3	Economic Trends	20
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Vision</b>	
4.1	Vision Statement	23
4.2	Issues and Goals	23
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Actions for Change</b>	
5.1	Guiding Revitalization Strategies	25
5.2	Housing Rehabilitation & Revitalization Actions	26
5.3	Economic Development Actions	32
5.4	Infrastructure Actions	34
5.5	Education, Recreation & Open Space Actions	36
5.6	Institutional & Historic Preservation Actions	38





## Section 1.0 – Introduction and Background

### 1.1 Purpose for a Neighborhood Plan

The primary purpose of a neighborhood plan is to develop strategies for neighborhood development that reflect the needs and desires of the community through a resident- and stakeholder-driven planning process. The City of Camden is undertaking a city-wide effort to create new and update old neighborhood plans as part of the Camden's Strategic Redevelopment Plan (SRP), as adopted in 2003.

The SRP is the guiding document for the economic recovery and revitalization of Camden, as required by the 2002 Municipal Rehabilitation and Economic Recovery Act, adopted by the State of New Jersey to pave the way for the revitalization of the City of Camden and other distressed cities. The SRP recommends that the City and the State's Economic Recovery Board (ERB) utilize program funds to support planning activities in those areas of the City, identified as "Transitional/Future Development Areas" and have not developed neighborhood plans or need to revise older plans. The Centerville Neighborhood is one of these areas identified and this neighborhood plan is funded through the ERB.

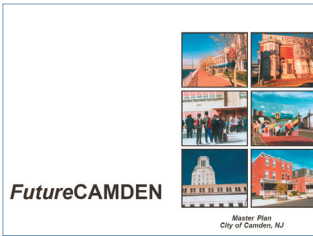
The SRP recognizes that community-based planning activities with resultant neighborhood plans are increasingly called for by the funding agencies that will be instrumental in implementing revitalization strategies in Camden. As currently structured by the SRP and administered by the ERB, the neighborhood plans will serve as the "bottom-up" planning process to update the City's Master Plan. This process ensures that revitalization efforts are eligible for funding assistance, including ERB monies, and that there will be consistency between neighborhood based plans and the City's Master Plan.

### 1.2 FutureCamden 2002: A Comprehensive Master Plan

FutureCamden 2002 is the currently adopted master plan for the City of Camden. The master plan is the guiding document that incorporates neighborhood plans and is used by the City's Planning Board and government to make changes to zoning regulations and other ordinances to achieve the vision for the neighborhood.



The ERB has identified Centerville as one of the "Transitional/Future Development Areas" eligible for funding.



Camden's Master Plan goals are embraced by the Centerville Strategic Neighborhood Plan.

The adopted master plan is a vision statement for the City and is the one of the starting points for the neighborhood planning process. The following goals for the city are presented in the master plan:

- Opportunities for home ownership and living wage employment enabling residents to steadily climb from poverty to prosperity
- Improved neighborhoods containing new homes, apartments and small businesses owned by community residents
- Neighborhood parks and gardens created from vacant lots
- Access to miles of City waterfront greenways
- New and refurbished schools ensuring that the educational and cultural system in each neighborhood allows every child the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities
- Expanded social services, health care and day care facilities, and improved community centers
- Increased public safety to eradicate drug dealers and arsonists

The adopted master plan outlines goals and recommendations for each neighborhood. These represent a snapshot of the needs and desires of the community when the plan was developed. The following are excerpts from the master plan addressing the vision and goals for the improvement of Camden's housing and neighborhoods and specific recommendations for Centerville:

## Improving Housing and Neighborhoods

### Overview

Camden's neighborhoods are positioned to benefit from several significant events at the beginning of the new century. Changing regional demographics, renewed interest in urban living, the revitalization of the waterfront, restructuring of public housing as mixed income communities, rebuilding of schools district-wide and a supply of vacant land to support new housing development present new opportunities for neighborhood improvement.

### Vision

All neighborhoods are safe, attractive and well maintained. Renovated schools, parks and recreation as well as modernized community facilities have expanded youth service activities and improved the quality of life of all residents.

Streets are cleaner with more trees and sidewalks. Vacant lots are transformed into community gardens and small playgrounds.

New and rehabilitated housing provides affordable housing options for residents of different incomes, ages and special needs. A new middle class has grown from within as residents have been empowered with the necessary skills and resources to reestablish clean and inviting neighborhoods free of drugs and crime. In turn, this has attracted more families to locate in the City's diverse neighborhoods.

The Master Plan outlines the following seven goals for achieving the above vision for improving housing and neighborhoods within the City.



## Housing Goals

- Create a coordinated City-wide housing and community development program.
- Restructure management of vacant and underutilized properties.
- Retain, empower, and attract middle income households.
- Provide economically integrated neighborhoods and deconcentrate poverty.

## Neighborhood Goals

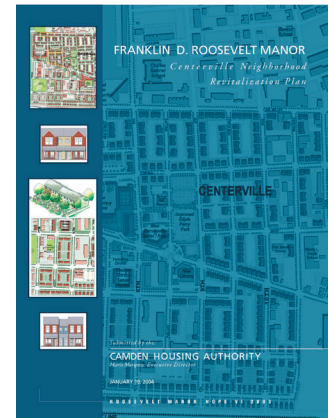
- Maintain and improve the appearance of neighborhoods.
- Prevent crime and reduce opportunities for it to occur.
- Build stronger neighborhoods through public-private partnerships.

## Centerville

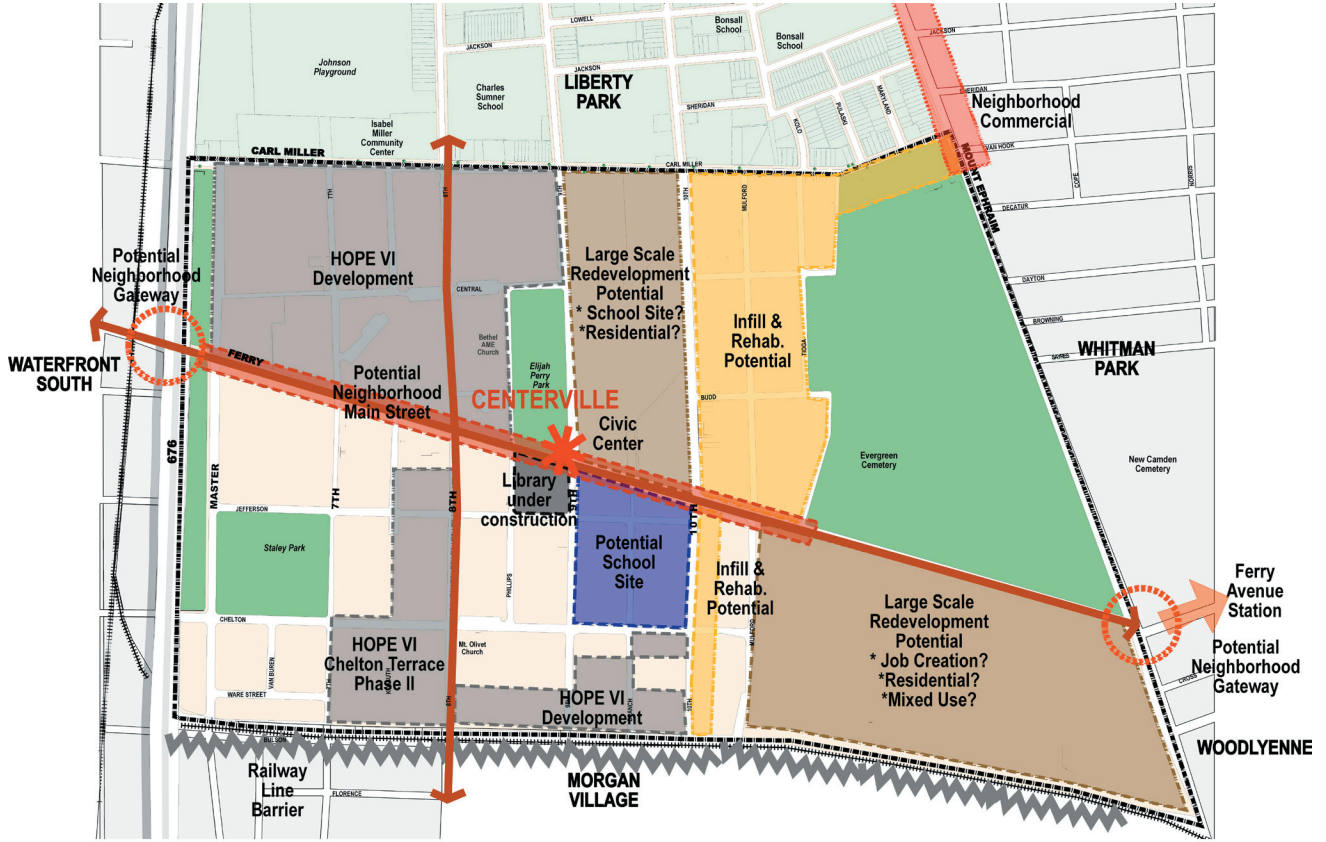
- Medium density residential land use through redevelopment, new housing development and rehabilitation is recommended. This includes the redevelopment and renovation of Roosevelt Manor, Branch Village and Chelton Terrace public housing projects as future HOPE VI mixed-income communities.
- Compact retail centers are suggested along Mt. Ephraim Avenue. A small neighborhood commercial center adjacent to the proposed library at 9th and Ferry Avenue should be evaluated.

- Creation of a light industrial district is proposed to redevelop a new urban industrial park between Ferry Avenue and Fairview Street west of Mt. Ephraim Avenue.
- Create landscaped buffer along I-676.
- Renovate Riletta Cream Elementary Schools and build a new Elementary School #1.
- Upgrade parks, recreation and open space along with community facilities throughout the neighborhood. Refurbish Staley Park and Elijah Perry Park. Create a new park at Central Avenue and 8th Street. "

Some of the recommendations set forth in the master plan have been acted upon in the past 3 years since the adoption of the plan. The City is undertaking improvements to Staley Park and the housing authority has complete one phase of redevelopment of Chelton Terrace, with the second phase underway, was successful in securing \$20 million in HOPE VI funding for the redevelopment of Roosevelt Manor, and using other HUD funding for the incremental revitalization of Branch Village.



In 2004, the Camden Housing Authority was awarded a \$20 million grant through the HOPE VI program.



Forum #1 - Centerville Opportunities & Constraints Map



### 1.3 Neighborhood Planning Process

The planning process in Centerville orchestrated by the City focused on community outreach and community organizing, striving for the broadest resident and stakeholder participation. The year-long process was structured around regular meetings that included three community forums run led by the City's prime planning consultant – Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC (WRT). The planning consultant team led by Philadelphia-based WRT, included the following sub-consultants as resources for the process:

- George Henry George Partners, Inc.- Market Analysis
- Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. – Civil Engineering
- Orth-Rodgers & Associates, Inc. – Traffic Planning

The three forums were held at 15-week intervals on January 25th, May 19th, and August 1st. The PowerPoint presentations are included in Appendix A. Below is a brief description of each of the forums:

- **Community Forum #1: Opportunities & Constraints – January, 25, 2005**

After an introduction of the planning consultant team, WRT presented the existing conditions, base assumptions, and current plans for areas of the neighborhood. A draft Opportunities & Constraints map was presented to the residents and stakeholders for input and then a discussion of needs and desires was facilitated by WRT. These needs and desires were documented and used by the consultant team as the basis for first steps in the planning process. These first steps included a preliminary market analysis and an exploration of traffic improvements.

- **Community Forum #2: Plan Possibilities– May 19, 2005**

Based on the input from Forum #1 WRT presented plan possibilities for review by the community. These plan possibilities were derived from the goals synthesis for the documented needs and desires of the community. The discussion period for this



Forum #2 - Centerville Mixed-Use / Retail Options

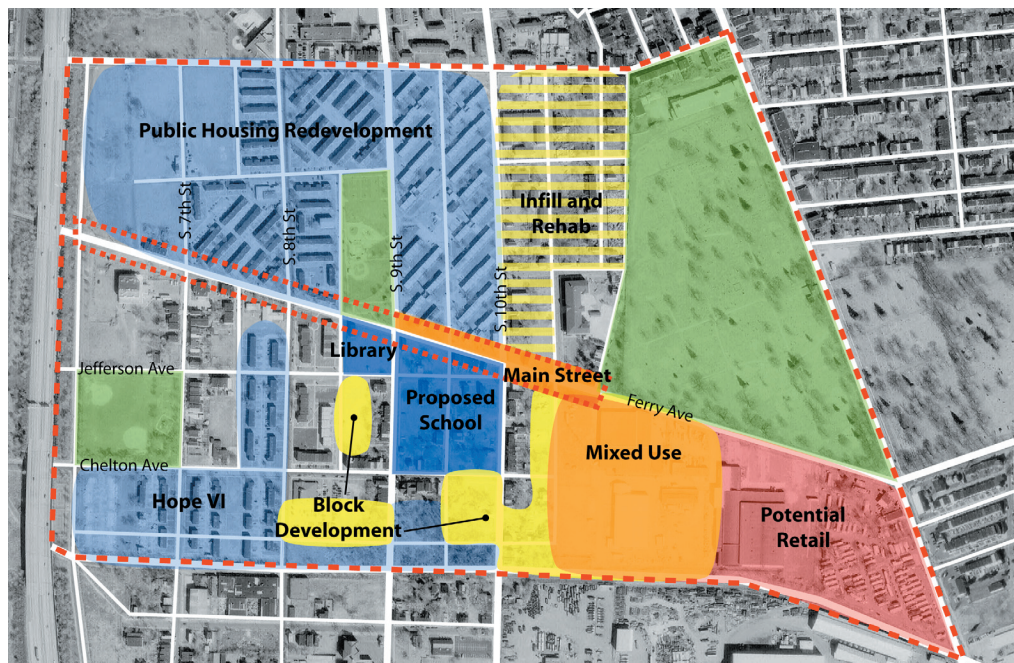


forum was designed to illicit input and direction for the next steps in the planning process. The next steps included completion of the retail market analysis (See Appendix B) and refinement of the plan possibilities into actions and implementation strategies.

- **Community Forum #3:  
Plan Actions– August 1, 2005**

The final forum was held to review and discuss the action areas, funding sources, and implementation strategies. Long- and short-term actions were identified and the presentation was used in a wrap-up meeting held in September where final revisions were considered before the plan was drafted by WRT.

The area planner responsible for the planning process was the Assistant Director of Development and Planning - Edward C. Williams, AICP/PP. Also integral to the process was the involvement of the members of City Council, the Director of Housing for the Camden Redevelopment Agency, and the Camden Housing Authority.

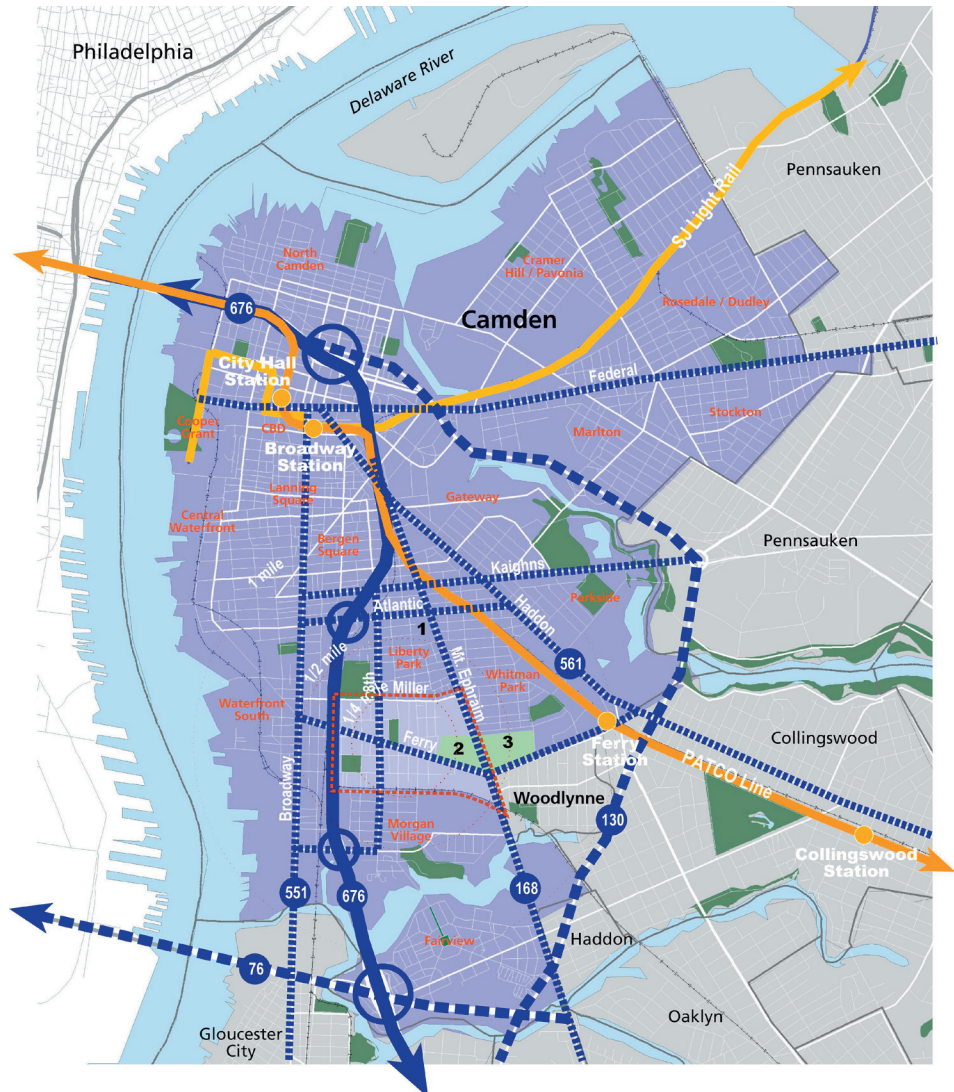


Forum #3 - Centerville Possible Action Areas

## 1.4 Organization of the Plan Document

The plan begins with a profile of the neighborhood that includes a description of the regional setting, a neighborhood history, population, and land use. A Trends Analysis follows in Section 3 which includes current and proposed activities and economic trends. Based on the planning process a vision statement has been created in Section 4 of the Plan, rooted in the issues raised by the community and the goals that address them.

Section 5, the implementation section of the plan is titled "Actions for Change" and includes general strategies and specific actions in the areas of neighborhood housing, economic activity, transportation, education and health and open space. Appendices are included at the end of the document that document the process and support the actions set forth in the plan.



- LEGEND**
- City of Camden
  - Camden County
  - Existing Open Space Land (excluding cemeteries)
  - Centerville Neighborhood
- 1 Virtua -West Jersey Hospital
  - 2 Evergreen Cemetery
  - 3 New Camden Cemetery
- Major Highway
  - Major Corridor
  - Minor Corridor
  - PATCO Line
  - South Jersey Light Rail

Centerville Regional Location Map

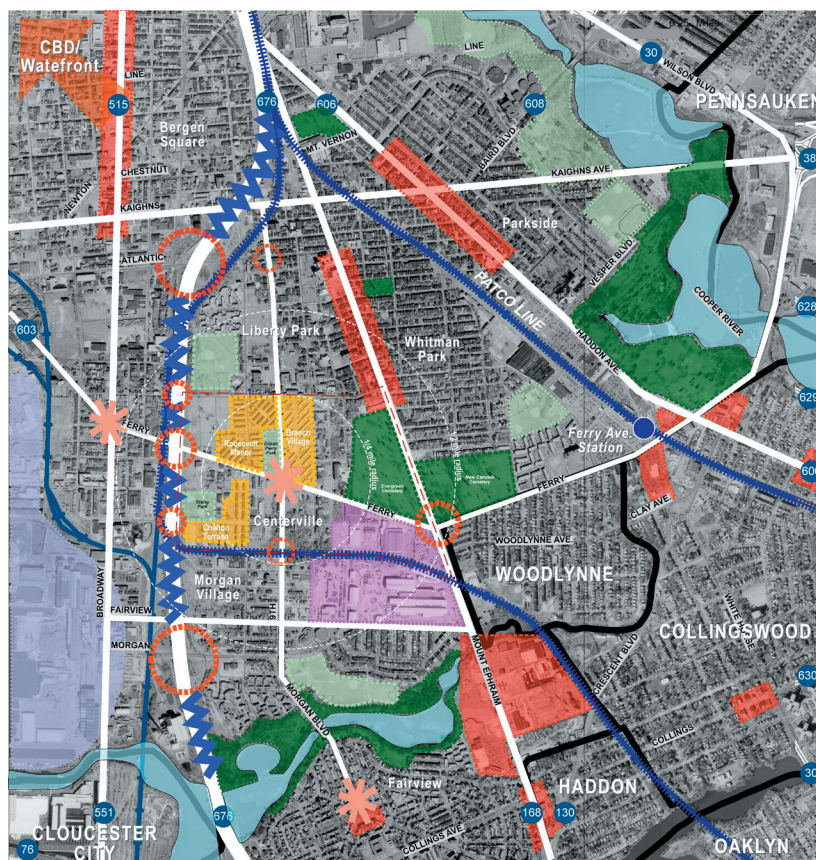


## Section 2.0 – Centerville Profile

### 2.1 Regional Setting

The neighborhood of Centerville is located on the southern edge of the City of Camden. The boundaries of the neighborhood outlined above are I-676, Carl Miller Boulevard, Mount Ephraim Avenue, and a railway line to the south. The neighborhood has excellent transportation connections. It is very accessible by car from the Route I-676 interchange on Atlantic Ave. and from Mount Ephraim Avenue on its western border. The PATCO train station on Ferry Avenue provides the neighborhood with another convenient transportation service.

To the northeast, just outside of the neighborhood, is the commercial main street of the Whitman Park and Liberty Park neighborhoods with Virtua Hospital as a significant institutional presence, and a mile to the southeast there is a suburban-style shopping plaza with a Pathmark supermarket, fast food, etc. The neighborhood is close to Camden's downtown and central waterfront with their government, retail, entertainment, and social services.



Centerville Neighborhood Context Map

#### Legend

- Study Area
- Camden Housing Authority Sites
- Recreational
- Open Space
- Commercial
- Light-Industrial
- Port-related Uses
- Barrier
- Gateway
- Significant Intersection
- Railroad





This Mid-19th Century platting map shows the Centerville community between Ferry Ave. and what is now Carl Miller Blvd.

## 2.2 History of the Neighborhood

Centerville was first identified as a community in the years prior to 1851. The area was named based on its central location between the villages of Camden and Kaighnton to the north and Gloucester City to the south. The original village extended almost to the Delaware River in the west and east to the Camden and Salem Road (today's Broadway). It was bounded on the north by present day Jackson St. and on the south by the road to Kaighn's Ferry (Ferry Ave.)

Building lots were laid out in the area by the Centerville and South Camden Land Company and the Kaighn Point Land Company on property formerly belonging to prominent Camden physician Isaac Mulford and the Mickle family. The land had been used primarily for agricultural purposes prior to its division into an urban grid of lots and blocks. An early frame farmhouse stood at the southeast corner of Central Avenue and Phillip Street.

In time the new community became recognized as a largely African American enclave. This may have prompted Dempsey Butler, wealthy real estate entrepreneur, to donate land at Charles Street and Ferry Avenue for use as an African American cemetery.

As the population of the area increased the neighborhood began to establish its own social institutions. First among these were the churches. The Scott Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1856 in a cellar on Kossuth Street. James Peacock built the first church building in 1858. It was a one story frame building located on Eighth Street just north of the Ferry Road. In 1882, a brick church was erected on Phillip Street below Central Ave. The church was later relocated to

a new building at Eighth and Ferry Ave. and was renamed Ferry Avenue Methodist Church.

Due to the prevailing racial and social attitudes of the time public housing projects were intended to house a particular racial or ethnic group. Centerville was the second city neighborhood selected for a public housing project. A site bordered by Van Hook, South Ninth, South Tenth Streets and Ferry Avenue was chosen. Clement T. Branch Village was opened for new residents on July 7, 1941. Dr. Clement Branch, for whom the project was named, was a Camden physician and civil rights leader. The completed project consisted of 279 housing units in 18 brick two-story, semi-fireproof buildings. The buildings that make up the Clement Branch complex typify federal housing design of the era. Borrowing from the early twentieth century Bauhaus design popular in Europe, and adhering to strict low cost guidelines set by federal government, the buildings of Branch Village are of a functional, utilitarian design featuring long, unembellished lines, flat roofs and minimal architectural decoration.

It was also during this period that a public swimming pool and community center were built in Centerville. The recreation complex was built on a two acre site at South Ninth and Ferry Ave. It included a two hundred-foot swimming pool, a wading pool, tennis courts, and a ballroom in the fashionable Art Deco style Community Center. There was an open deck pavilion on the second floor. During the summer months movies were shown on the side of the recreation center. The pool closed in the 1970's and was demolished in 1981 after a drowning occurred.

By the early 1960's vast areas of Centerville were dilapidated and in need of reinvestment. A federally funded plan for "slum clearance" and new construction on a sixty-six acre site in Centerville and Liberty Park was announced. The plan called for the construction of 500 townhouses, at least three shopping centers and a greenway park. It was an ambitious plan that promised much for Camden. Typical of the federal urban renewal programs of the period, demolition was not followed by the anticipated new construction. There was no real connection between public land clearance and private redevelopment, the underlying assumption the program was built upon. Although some private apartment complexes were built when the urban renewal program expired in the early 1970's.

## 2.3 Population

The neighborhood of Centerville contained 2,972 persons based on the 2000 U.S. Census. Future population trends indicate that there will be renewed growth in the City of Camden after several decades of declining population. Some of this growth will result from the pressure of housing costs in the City of Philadelphia. This growth, however, is more likely to impact the waterfront and downtown areas of the City. But, as the downtown and waterfront areas begin to emerge many people currently living in these areas will seek more affordable housing in other neighborhoods within the City of Camden. This will sustain the demand for housing in the Centerville neighborhood.

Historically, Centerville has been a Black community, so it is not surprising that Black

persons comprise approximately 80 percent of Centerville's population. At slightly over 10 percent of the population, Hispanics are another substantial racial group in the neighborhood. The remaining segment of persons are white, asian or other racial classification.

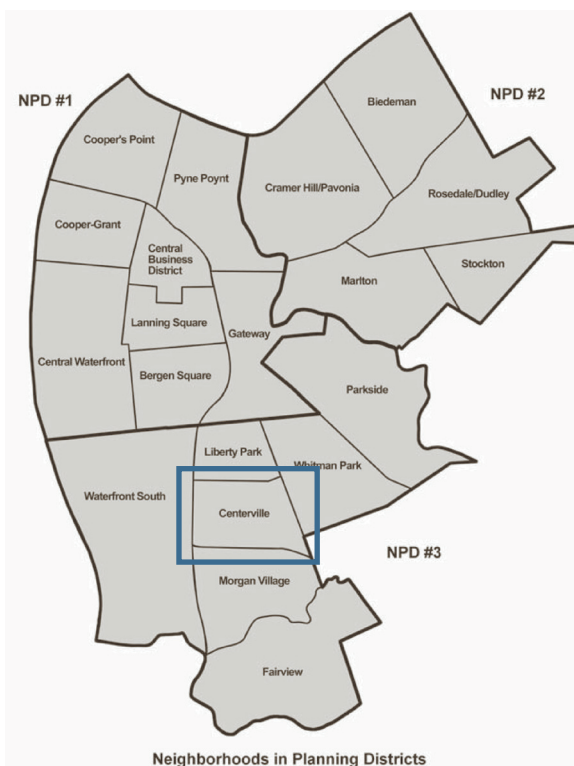


Table 1. Demographics of the Centerville Neighborhood

Demographic Characteristics		Economic Characteristics (in average percent)	
Population (2000 census)	2972	Population Below Poverty	43.8 %
		Children Below Poverty	47.4 %
		Households Without Cars	63.9 %
Housing Characteristics (in average percent)		Per Capita Income	\$9163.3
Vacant Housing	20 %	High School Diploma or GED	44.7 %
Owner-Occupied Housing	25.8 %		
Renter-Occupied Housing	74.2 %	Race (in average percent)	
Avg. Median of Housing Value	\$ 41666.3	Asian	0.9 %
		Black	80.4 %
		Hispanic	1.8 %
		White	3.7 %
		Other Race/Ethnicity	3.2 %

Source: Camden Resource Guide - [www.camdenresources.org](http://www.camdenresources.org)

## 2.4 Land Use

The predominant land uses are housing, institutional and vacant property.



Centerville Land Use Map

- |   |                  |                                   |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Elizabeth Miller Community Center         | Church           | Retail                            |
| 2 Antioch Baptist Church                    | Mixed Use        | School                            |
| 3 Antioch Baptist Church Annex              | Other            | Vacant Building                   |
| 4 Ferry Ave. United Methodist Church        | Other Commercial | Vacant Lot                        |
| 5 Mt. Olivet 7th Day Adventist Church       | Recreational     | Occupied Lot                      |
| 6 Evergreen Cemetery                        | Residential      | Camden Housing Authority Sites    |
| 7 New Camden Cemetery                       |                  | Centerville Neighborhood Boundary |
| 8 Camden Marine Mart                        |                  |                                   |
| 9 Riletta L. Cream School                   |                  |                                   |
| 10 10th Street Baptist Church               |                  |                                   |
| 11 New City Branch Library                  |                  |                                   |
| 12 Bethel AME Church                        |                  |                                   |
| 13 Sanctuary Church of the Abiding Presence |                  |                                   |
| 14 Vacant Church at 9th and Chelton         |                  |                                   |

## 2.5 Housing

Centerville’s housing stock is seriously degraded and about 20 percent of current dwellings are vacant. Approximately ¾ of the occupied housing are rentals and ¼ of the units are owner-occupied. A large amount of the vacant property in Centerville is currently owned by the City Redevelopment Agency. The proposed HOPE VI mixed-income development (Roosevelt Manor/Chelton Terrace) with 102 affordable homeownership units, 150 elderly units, and 330 affordable rental units will be the largest influence on Centerville’s housing market in the next five years. In addition to the HOPE VI development the housing authority will be demolishing and redeveloping other public housing in the 3 to 10 year period.

Corner bars, corner convenient stores, a cleaners, a florist and take-out restaurants represent a very small amount of retail services in and around the neighborhood, focused primarily along Mt. Ephraim Ave., Ferry Ave. and Carl Miller Blvd.



Vacant Housing in Centerville

## 2.6 Economy

The neighborhood of Centerville is a relatively small geographic area. From an economic perspective it is a part of a much larger trade area covering a mile in each direction from the center point of Ferry Avenue and Mt. Ephraim Ave. Economic conditions within the neighborhood are depressed. Almost 44 % of the population lives below the official poverty level. The average per capita income according to the 2000 U.S. Census was \$9,163.

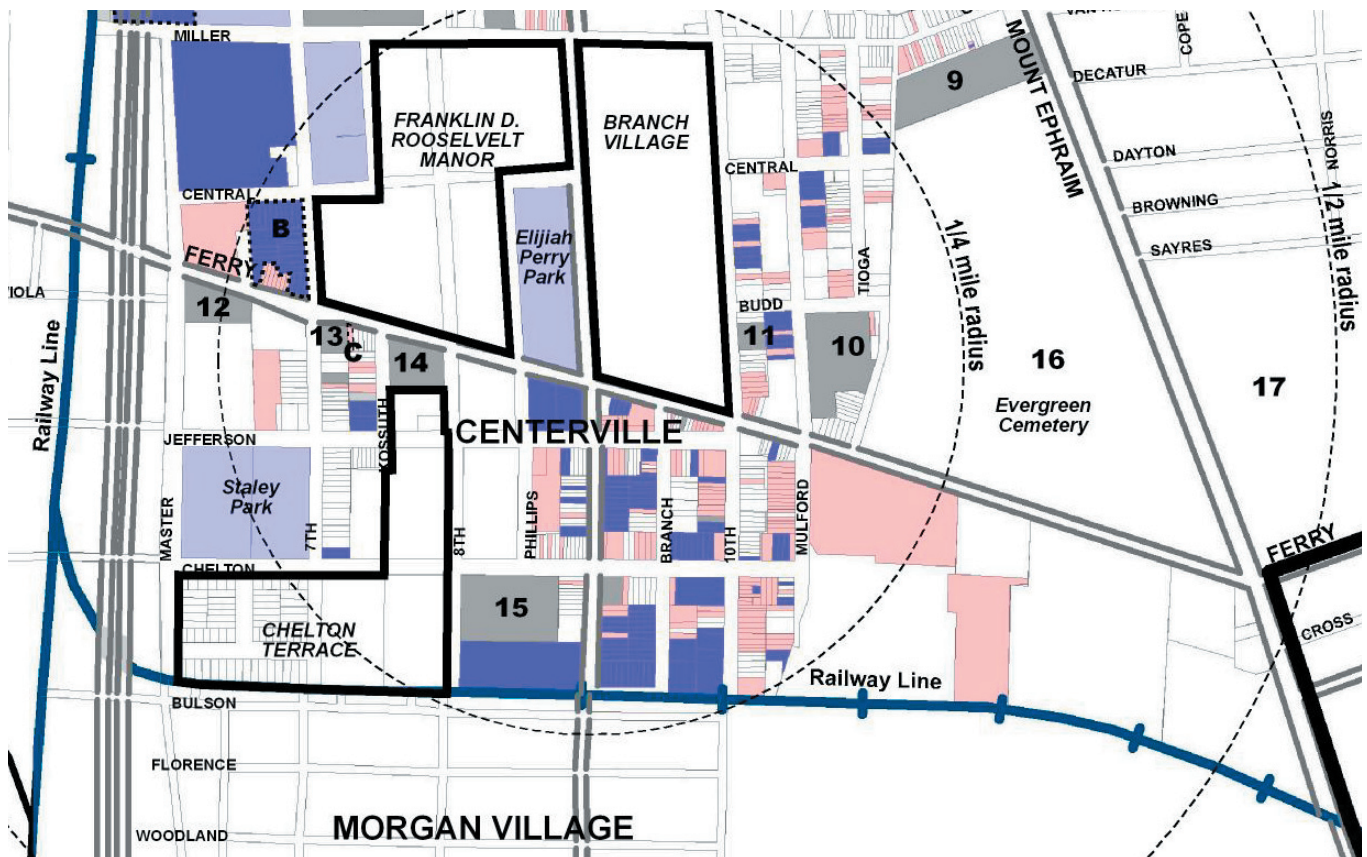
Residents of Centerville currently have to leave their neighborhood for almost all of their shopping needs and retail centers along Mt. Ephraim Ave. are their most frequent destinations.



Centerville Vacancy Map







Centerville Vacancy & Ownership Map

- Legend**
- Occupied City Owned Land
  - Public Vacant Land or Building
  - Private Vacant Land or Building
  - Data Not Available
  - Active Institutional Use
  - Centerville Neighborhood Boundary



## Section 3.0 - Neighborhood Trends Analysis

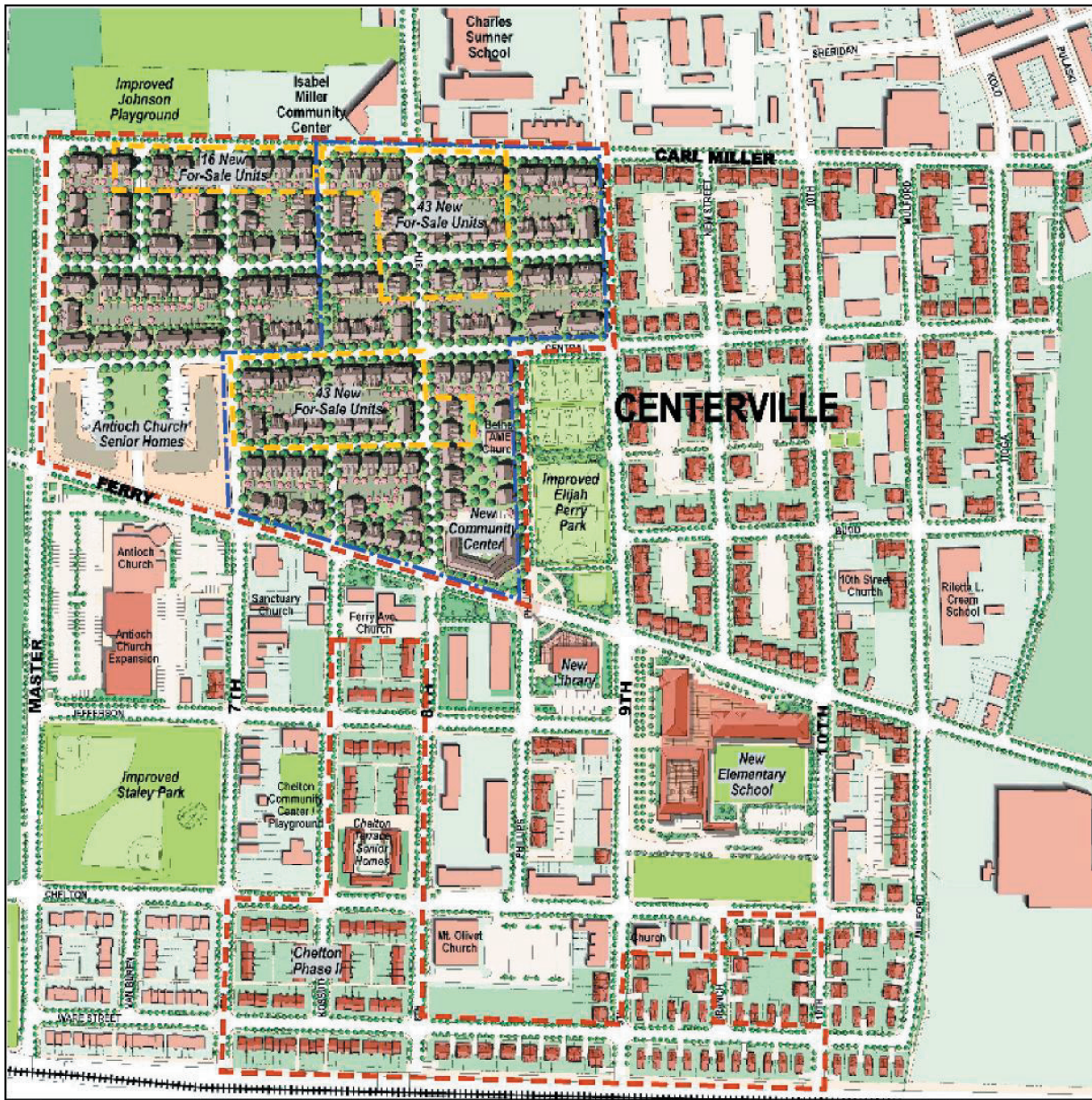
### 3.1 Current Redevelopment

Both the City and the Camden Housing Authority (CHA) are very active in revitalizing the Centerville neighborhood. Because the Housing Authority is the largest single owner and operator of rental housing in the neighborhood they are the most important agent for change. Following the direction set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the CHA is partnering with private developers in the pursuit of privately managed, mixed-income, mixed tenancy projects. Other important agents for change include the many churches in the neighborhood who have plans for expanding the services they provide for child care, social support and housing. The following is a list of current redevelopment activities in the neighborhood, including projects completed or underway:

- Refurbishment of Staley Park (City sponsored)
- New County/City Branch Library at Ferry Ave. and 9<sup>th</sup> Street (County sponsored)
- Phase II of Chelton Terrace as part of the Roosevelt Manor HOPE VI – 101 family rental townhouses (Public/private partnership with CHA)
- Antioch Senior Housing at Ferry Ave. and 7<sup>th</sup> Street – 64 elderly-only apartments (Privately sponsored)



Chelton Phase 1 Townhouses – Torti-Gallas Architects



Current HOPE VI Map

Centerville HOPE VI Area Legend

- Adopted Redevelopment Plan
- Proposed Revisions to the Redevelopment Plan
- HOPE VI 2003 Proposed Development
- HOPE VI Homeownership Opportunities
- Roosevelt Manor Site



### 3.2 Proposed Revitalization

The largest scale of proposed revitalization in Centerville is the complete redevelopment of all public housing through public/private partnerships. Proposed activities that will have significant impacts on the future quality of life in Centerville include renovated and new elementary schools and a refurbished park in the center of the neighborhood. The following is a list of proposed revitalization activities:

- Phase III of Chelton Terrace as part of the Roosevelt Manor HOPE VI – 20 elderly-only rental apartments (Public/private partnership with CHA)
- Off-site phases of Roosevelt Manor HOPE VI – 187 mixed-income rental and homeownership housing (Public/private partnership with CHA)
- On-site phases of Roosevelt Manor HOPE VI – 230 mixed-income rental and homeownership housing and mixed-use community center (Public/private partnership with CHA)
- Redevelopment of Branch Village public housing site – Program to be determined (Public/private partnership with CHA)
- Antioch Senior Housing Phase II at Ferry Ave. and 7<sup>th</sup> Street – 66 elderly-only apartments (Privately sponsored)
- Refurbishment of Elijah Perry Park (City sponsored)
- Renovation of Riletta L. Cream Elementary (State/City sponsored)
- New Elementary School at Ferry Ave. and 9<sup>th</sup> Street (State/City sponsored)



Two Bedroom Twin



Three Bedroom Twin



(2) Two Bedroom Townhouse  
(2) Three Bedroom Townhouse



(4) Two Bedroom Townhouse  
(4) One Bedroom Flat

HOPE VI Twins, Townhouses, and 3-story Apartments

### 3.3 Economic Trends

A retail market analysis was completed by George Henry George Partners of Bethesda, MD to understand the economic trends and potential amenities that could be located in Centerville. The conclusions were that by 2015 there will be a market for 265,000 square feet of retail services, of which 60-70% is replacement space for obsolete retail space in the trade area. The full retail demand analysis report is included in Appendix B. Below is a brief explanation of these conclusions:

The retail market for the Centerville neighborhood is a complex market. This is largely because there are little or no quality retail businesses located directly in what most Centerville residents define as "their neighborhood". The 100% retail location in the neighborhood is the intersection of Ferry Ave. and Mt. Ephraim Ave., however, few residents identify with that location as one that is integral to the neighborhood because of its location on the neighborhood's northeastern border.

The Centerville neighborhood retail market is further complicated because the neighborhood, not unlike many city neighborhoods, is a relatively small geographical area. From an economic perspective it is a part of a much larger trade area covering a mile in each direction from the center point of Ferry Ave. and Mt. Ephraim Ave. Within this larger trade area, retailing along Ferry Ave., with the exception of the Ferry and Mt. Ephraim intersection is almost non-existent, while retailing along portions of Mt. Ephraim outside of Centerville are rather substantial, as noted in the Section 2.1 - Regional Setting.

While residents of Centerville might not have to go great distances to shop, they clearly must leave their neighborhood. The fact for residents is a deficiency in the neighborhood that a plan should address. The community confirmed this as part of the planning process.

To add to the complexity of the retail market, Camden is an older city with a decaying retail infrastructure. Much of this retail infrastructure will have to be replaced or renovated over the next two decades if it is to remain competitive. As a part of this revitalization process, the retail infrastructure can be retooled and redistributed to better serve all of the neighborhoods in the city.

From the field survey completed, it was estimated that as much as 40% of the retail infrastructure in the one-mile primary trade area will have to be renovated or replaced. Based upon our estimates of retail space within the trade area this would require the renovation or replacement of nearly 360,000 square feet of retail space. Any new retail development in the Centerville neighborhood would contribute toward this need.

Table 2 shows the conclusions as to probable retail space captures for two different locations within the Centerville neighborhood. Using market capture rates established for both the intersections at Mt. Ephraim Ave. and Ferry Ave. and 10th Street and Ferry Ave., it established potential support for nearly 200,000 square feet of space at Mt. Ephraim and Ferry and less than 65,000 square feet at 10th and Ferry by 2015.

Based on the retail market report, the Mt. Ephraim and Ferry intersection can land a supermarket and drug store anchor and therefore support additional retail up to the 200,000 square feet. In contrast, the market for the location along Ferry Ave. at 10<sup>th</sup> Street is less rosy and would require other interventions beyond market forces. Fortunately for Centerville, the City and the Camden Housing Authority are poised to provide interventions as they implement the HOPE VI project, renovate and build new elementary schools, and plan for the redevelopment of the Branch Village site.

Table 2. Supportable Square Feet of Retail and Personal Services in the Centerville Neighborhood

Retail Category	Sales Potential	Sales psf	Supportable Space	Mt. Ephraim & Ferry (20%)	Ferry & 10th (20%)
Apparel	\$52,884,053	175	302,195	60,439	21,154
Entertainment	\$11,742,012	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Food at Home	\$88,140,088	400	220,350	44,070	15,425
Food Away	\$52,884,053	375	141,024	28,205	9,872
Drug Stores	\$34,536,600	325	106,266	21,253	7,439
Furniture/ Equipment	\$5,876,006	250	23,504	4,701	1,645
Personal Services	\$11,752,012	250	47,008	9,402	3,291
Alcoholic Beverages	\$11,752,012	225	52,231	10,446	3,656
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$269,576,834</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>892,579</b>	<b>179,516</b>	<b>62,481</b>
Inflow				17,951	1,784
<b>Total</b>				<b>197,467</b>	<b>64,355</b>

Source: George, Henry, George Partners, LLC





The neighborhood vision is to "Revitalize Centerville as a diverse urban village where the young and old can live, work, and play on safe, vital streets."

## Section 4.0: Vision

### 4.1 Vision Statement

Based on the input provided by the residents and stakeholders during the planning process, the following vision statement has been formulated for the Centerville neighborhood:

“Revitalize Centerville as a diverse urban village where the young and old can live, work, and play on safe, vital streets.”

### 4.2 Issues and Goals

Based on the vision statement, six issue areas and associated goals have been established for growth in the Centerville neighborhood:

#### 1. Vacant Land

Retain existing and attract new residents to the neighborhood as the primary investment in the neighborhood.

#### 2. Housing Conditions and Choices

Improve the existing housing stock and create new housing opportunities to create a diverse community of homeowners and renters.

#### 3. Place-making

Re-create Ferry Ave. as the safe, physically attractive center of the neighborhood and reinforce it as Centerville’s social center.

#### 4. Amenities

Provide for convenient, high quality services, such as transit, schools, retail and community space.

#### 5. Health and Safety

Provide for high quality infrastructure, streetscape and parks.

#### 6. Institutions and History

Preserve sites of historical significance and reinforce institutions.



Table 3. Centerville Neighborhood Strategic Plan

1. Chelton Terrace Completion	8. Southeast Mixed-Use Area
2. Off-Site HOPE VI Development	9. Infrastructure Improvements
3. Antioch Senior Housing	10. New and Improved Schools
4. Roosevelt Manor HOPE VI Redevelopment	11. Staley Park Improvements
5. Branch Village Redevelopment	12. Elijah Perry Park Improvements
6. Rehabilitation and Infill Housing	13. Institutional Growth and Historic Preservation
7. "Main Street" - Pedestrian-Friendly, Mixed-Use Ferry Ave.	

0' 100' 200' 300' 600'



## Section 5.0 - Actions for Change

### 5.1 Guiding Revitalization Strategies

As noted previously, the redevelopment of Centerville’s public housing into mixed-income housing is the major driving force for revitalization of the neighborhood. Since these efforts, as embodied by the HOPE VI program, involve a majority of the land in the neighborhood to achieve true income and tenancy mixing, the guiding strategies, objectives, and specific actions set forth in this plan focus on expanding housing opportunities and providing amenities for the existing and new residents. These amenities include community facilities for education and recreation, retail services and job creation.

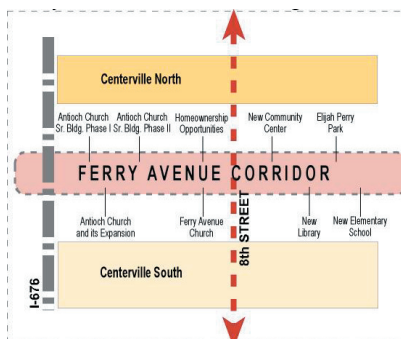
The current Centerville Redevelopment Plan is the primary regulatory tool to realize the HOPE VI program. The Planned Residential Development (PRD) zoning is the base zoning for the Redevelopment Plan. The adoption and amendments to the Redevelopment Plan includes bulk requirements that foster housing that is in keeping with the character of Centerville.

As implementation of this plan is undertaken, the Centerville Redevelopment Plan should serve as a tool and guiding strategy, to be

amended to include more property and extend into the industrial area to the southeastern area of the neighborhood. In this plan, the land use considerations for this area have been purposefully kept as options to allow for the greatest flexibility in response to market conditions.

Another guiding strategy identified in the HOPE VI planning process and extended in the Neighborhood Plan process is the development of Ferry Ave. as a “Main Street” for the neighborhood. This revitalization strategy is integrated into all of the action areas detailed below and is central to the success of the plan’s goal of “Place-making.”

Below is the diagram created in 2003 for the HOPE VI planning process:



HOPE VI “Main Street” Diagram



Existing Housing Character



Two Bedroom Twin



Proposed HOPE VI Twins



Before



After

Photo-Simulations for Rehabilitation and infill Housing

## 5.2 Housing Rehabilitation & Revitalization Actions

Objectives and specific actions for rehabilitation and revitalization of Centerville's housing are outlined in this section. These actions are viewed as the most critical first steps in transforming the neighborhood as a place of choice from a place of last resort – as is currently the case with the public housing projects.

The overall housing goal for Centerville is to retain existing residents, and expand housing choices for them and new residents of all income levels. The following objectives are recommended in achieving this goal:

1. Conserve existing housing where possible;
2. Rehabilitate existing housing for mixed-income, mixed-tenancy (rental and homeownership) population;
3. Build new mixed-income rental housing on vacant property;
4. Build new mixed-income for-sale housing integrated into rental;
5. Build residential along Ferry Ave. in mixed-use development to provide eyes on the street;
6. Include housing opportunities for the elderly and families through the neighborhood; and
7. Expand new housing opportunities in the southeast area where feasible.



## Actions

The specific action areas are identified below and located on the diagrams in the margin. Priorities and/or timelines for the implementation of the actions are elaborated upon where appropriate, highlighting the actions importance or linkage to other actions in the plan.

### 1. Chelton Terrace Completion

As noted previously, the completion of Phase II of Chelton Terrace is currently being completed. Completion of Phase III of the site redevelopment is a high priority action for the neighborhood and its integration with the adjacent HOPE VI development. Currently, the specific program of Phase III is being redefined and affords an opportunity to address current housing needs for the elderly and families.

### 2. Off-Site HOPE VI Development

As noted previously, an off-site HOPE VI program of 187 mixed-income rental and homeownership housing is proposed. The program is on a 48-month completion timeline, so the availability of affordable vacant land in the neighborhood is critical to its success. The amount of vacant property in the neighborhood is a major contributor to blight, so the development of the off-site project is critical to changing the image of the neighborhood, making it a very high priority.

### 3. Antioch Senior Housing

The proposed second phase of elderly-only apartments at the corner of Ferry Ave. and Master Street is an action area to ensure that Centerville remains a multi-



Chelton Terrace Phases I-III



Off-site HOPE VI Project Areas



Antioch Senior Housing Phases I and II



Roosevelt Manor HOPE VI Redevelopment



Branch Village Redevelopment



Rehabilitation and Infill Housing

generational community. The demand for this housing type will surely increase as the neighborhood is revitalized.

**4. Roosevelt Manor HOPE VI Redevelopment**

Demolition of the current site for the development of 230 mixed-income rental and homeownership housing is proposed, as noted previously. The impact on Ferry Ave. in developing housing facing onto the street and the construction of a mixed-use community center at the corner of 8th Street and Ferry Ave. will dramatically transform the image of the neighborhood. For this reason and because it will provide much needed new housing stock, this action is a very high priority.

**5. Branch Village Redevelopment**

The Camden Housing Authority currently has some funds available for rehabilitation of apartments at Branch Village, but has expressed interest in a more comprehensive redevelopment of the site that would retain the number of housing units currently on site and include mixed-used development along Ferry Ave. This neighborhood planning process has begun the dialogue within the community, so engaging in a resident-driven planning process is a very high priority for this site because it can build upon the positive energy of the HOPE VI project as new buildings go up and obsolete public housing is taken down.

## 6. Rehabilitation and Infill Housing

It is important to retain both the existing residents of the neighborhood and what housing stock and architectural character currently exists. Like the HOPE VI project, this action should include for-sale housing both in rehabilitation and infill to increase ownership in Centerville. Unlike the redevelopment of the public housing sites, this effort is part individual initiative and part neighborhood strategy that can be undertaken by the City and local non-profits. To build on the momentum of the Camden Housing Authority's efforts, the City should seek developers for the acquisition and development of vacant properties in these action areas. The community should work with the City to set up neighborhood-based housing center, possibly in the Library or one of the Housing Authority's community centers, so residents can access information about façade improvement programs, rehabilitation loans and grants, and new housing opportunities.



Before



After

Photo-Simulations for Vacant Block Infill





Corner of Ferry Ave. and Mt. Ephraim Ave.



Potential redevelopment of the corner of Ferry Ave. and Mt. Ephraim Ave. for convenience retail



## Implementation and Funding

Implementation of these actions should include public/private partnerships whenever possible to bring the most resources to bear on Centerville's revitalization efforts. The Housing Authority and local non-profits active in the neighborhood should seek out partners that bring development expertise and mixed-financing solutions.

Funding programs available for rehabilitation and new construction of housing include:

### Homeownership

#### U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

- HOPE VI Program – Soft-second mortgage assistance
- Section 8 Homeownership Program

#### U.S. Treasury / IRS

- New Market Tax Credit Program

#### New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJCA)

- Balance Housing Program
- Lead Based Paint Abatement Program
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program
- Pre-Development Loan Partnership Program
- Weatherization Program

#### New Jersey Housing Mortgage Financing Agency (HMFA)

- 100% Mortgage Financing Program
- Employer Assisted Housing Program
- Home Plus Program
- Homebuyer Mortgage Program
- Market-Oriented Neighborhood Investment Program (MONI)

- New Jersey Reverse Mortgage Program
- Purchase Rehabilitation Mortgage Program
- Small Start Program
- Camden Economic Recovery Board (CERB)
- Demolition and Rehabilitation Financing
- Residential Neighborhood Improvement Fund

### Rental

#### U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

- Section 8 Program
- HOPE VI Program

#### U.S. Treasury / IRS

- New Market Tax Credit Program

#### New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJCA)

- Balance Housing Program
- HOME Rental Rehabilitation Program
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program
- Pre-Development Loan Partnership Program

#### New Jersey Housing Mortgage Financing Agency (HMFA)

- At Home Downtown Loan Program
- City Living Program
- Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- Market-Oriented Neighborhood Investment Program
- Multi-Family Housing Mortgage Loan Programs
- Small Rental Project Preservation Loan Program



Pedestrian-Friendly, Mixed-Use Main Street



Southeast Mixed Use Area

### 5.3 Economic Development Actions

The goals of providing creating a “Main Street” along Ferry Ave. and the provision of convenient, high quality retail services emerged from the community forums. The objectives and specific actions that address these goals have two components. One is an immediate potential for the integration of retail services along Ferry Ave. as part of the public housing redevelopment. The second component is the potential redevelopment of the area in southeast Centerville, between Mulford and Mt. Ephraim Ave. along Ferry Ave.

The following objectives are recommended in achieving this goal:

1. Create a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use retail center with convenient parking for the neighborhood residents
2. Create an pedestrian-friendly commercial center in the neighborhood that creates jobs; and
3. Locate opportunities for full-service retail services with a grocery store.

#### Actions

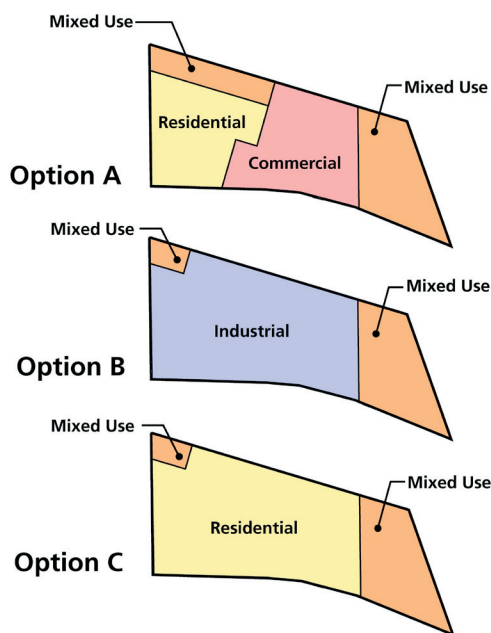
The specific action areas are identified below and located on the diagrams in the margin. Priorities and/or timelines for the implementation of the actions are elaborated upon where appropriate, highlighting the action’s importance or linkage to other actions in the plan.

### 1. "Main Street" - Pedestrian-Friendly, Mixed-Use Ferry Ave.

The "Main Street" concept along Ferry Ave. should include retail mixed-use development from Elijah Perry Park to Mulford Ave., with a high priority action area on the housing authority's property at the HOPE VI community center and along the frontage of Branch Village. The mostly vacant, private property east of 10th Street should be assembled by the City to extend the potential as a two sided retail "Main Street." Implementation of this action is link to infrastructure actions set forth in the next section.

### 2. Southeast Mixed-Use Area

As stated previously this area has alternative future options, that range from an industrial park, as proposed in the City's master plan, to a mixed-use redevelopment that incorporates larger retail services such as a grocery store, drug store and retail apparel stores. As identified in the planning process, the inclusion of the residents living at the mobile home park at the far eastern edge is important to any redevelopment proposed. To that end, the City should work with the owners and residents in this action area to develop redevelopment options based on the Options A, B, and C, illustrated herein, and amend the Centerville Redevelopment Plan to include this area.



Southeast Mixed-Use Area Options

## Implementation and Funding

Funding sources available for retail development include:

### U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

- Community Renewal Program
- HOPE VI Main Street Program (requires Main Street designation)

### U.S. Treasury / IRS

- New Market Tax Credit Program

### U.S. Small Business Administration

- New Jersey Small Business Development Centers Program

### New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA)

- Direct Loans
- Entrepreneurial Training Institute
- Fund for Community Economic Development
- Loan Guarantees
- Local Development Financing for Commercial Industrial Program
- SBA 504 Program - Building Equipment Loan
- Smart Growth Pre-Development Financing
- Statewide Loan Pool for Business Program
- Taxable Bond Financing

### New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA)

- Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program

### New Jersey Housing Mortgage Financing Agency (HMFA)

- At Home Downtown Loan Program
- City Living Program
- Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- Market-Oriented Neighborhood Investment Program

- Multi-Family Housing Mortgage Loan Programs
- Small Rental Project Preservation Loan Program

### New Jersey Redevelopment Authority

- Property Acquisition Financing

### Camden Economic Recovery Board (CERB)

- Infrastructure Funding

## 5.4 Infrastructure Actions

Important to the success of re-creating Ferry Ave. as Centerville's "Main Street" is improving the safety of Ferry Ave. and creating attractive and easily accessible retail with attendant parking. The objectives and the actions to achieve this are linked, as detailed below:

1. Reduce the speed of traffic along Ferry Ave. to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.
2. Provide convenient parking along the length of Ferry Ave. to reduce the use of local residential streets.
3. Create an attractive street environment that balances the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and the automobile.
4. Improve the utilities infrastructure throughout the neighborhood.

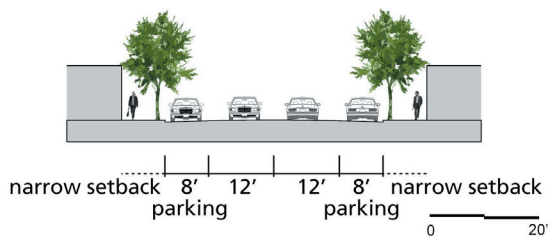
The specific action areas are identified below. The primary action is illustrated in the diagram in the margin and the sections and photo simulation provided herein. Priorities and/or timelines for the implementation of the actions are elaborated upon where appropriate, highlighting the action's importance or linkage to other actions in the plan.



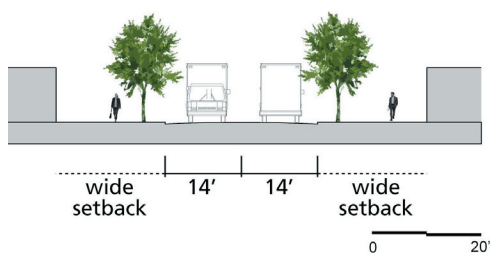
## Actions

### 1. Widening Ferry Ave.

The City should work with the Camden Housing Authority and the County in their capital planning process to design, fund, and implement a new cross-section for Ferry Ave. that includes two parking lanes and two travel lanes for the length of the street in Centerville (Master to Mt. Ephraim). West of Mulford this widening will be integrated into the housing redevelopment of Roosevelt Manor and Branch Village. East of Mulford the widening will shift to the south side. This is a high priority because of the linkage to the HOPE VI project and its 48-month timeline.



Ferry Ave. Street Section - Before



Ferry Ave. Street Section - After

### 2. Streetscape and Crosswalks

Linked to the widening of Ferry Ave. is a streetscape comprised of: shade trees; street furniture, such as benches and trash cans; and special pedestrian lighting enhancements.

### 3. Basic Infrastructure

As the major redevelopment efforts are implemented streets, streetscape, and utilities should be improved. Because these action areas are linked to other actions the priorities are linked.



Ferry Ave. Infrastructure Improvements



Ferry Ave. - Before



Ferry Ave. - After

## Implementation and Funding

Funding sources available for infrastructure development include:

### New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

- New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust Loan Program
- New Jersey Sewage Infrastructure Improvement Act Grants

### Camden Economic Recovery Board (CERB)

- Infrastructure Funding

## 5.5 Education, Recreation & Open Space Actions

The City and the State are actively pursuing improvements to the education, recreation and open space amenities in Centerville. As part of the State's Abbott District funding of new school facilities the City has proposed the renovation and expansion of the Riletta L. Cream Elementary School and a new elementary school to relieve school overcrowding and accommodate population growth.

As previously noted, the City is currently engaging in the design for the refurbishment of Staley Park. The City's parks master plan has Elijah Perry Park slated for future redesign.

The following are the objectives and specific action areas that this plan recommends:

1. Accommodate local elementary school-age children in neighborhood-based schools.
2. Improve recreation and open space amenities in Centerville.

## Actions

### 1. New Elementary School

Currently, the State has put a freeze on school construction spending. The gubernatorial election in November 2005 will usher in a new administration and a new funding strategy for school construction. The new school is a very high priority for the neighborhood, because of the timeline for implementation and occupancy of the HOPE VI mixed-income housing. At the time a new funding strategy is announced and available, the City should act immediately to move this school to the top of their priority list.

### 2. Riletta L. Cream Renovation/Expansion

Because a new school has the potential for relieving overcrowding at the area's schools, the renovation and expansion of the Cream School should follow the implementation of the new school.

### 3. Park Improvements

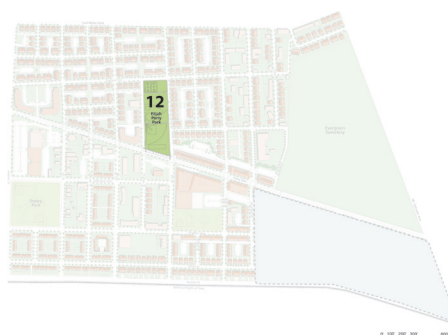
The City should continue to implement its parks master plan in the Centerville neighborhood.



New and Improved Schools



Staley Park Improvements



Elijah Perry Park Improvements

## Implementation and Funding

In addition to the State Abbott District funding, the City should seek additional funding from private and public foundations that seek to improve education and physical health in low-income communities. The Foundation Center (<http://fdncenter.org/>) is a recognized clearing housing for philanthropy in the U.S. Below is a sample of education and parks related foundation funding sources:

## Education

- The Annenberg Foundation (PreK-12 education)
- The Carnegie Corporation (education, child development)
- Charles A. Dana Foundation (research, school reform)
- The Community Foundation of New Jersey (education, community, children in need)
- DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund (improve education, low income)
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (education, community)
- Pew Charitable Trusts (education, policy)
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund (teacher education)
- Spencer Foundation (research, fellowship programs)
- Nellie Mae Educational Foundation (literacy, after school, minority, adult literacy)
- MarcoPolo Professional Development Grant Program (K-12, internet)
- Verizon Foundation (technology, literacy)
- The Sprint Foundation (technology, teacher skills)
- Corning Foundation Grants (education, curriculum enrichment)
- National Education Association (educational improvement, professional development)
- Educational Foundation of America (general education)

## Parks

- The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) Funding – The National Park Service UPARR program was established in November 1978 by Public Law 95-625, authorizing \$725 million to provide matching grants and technical assistance to economically distressed urban communities. The purpose of the program is to provide direct Federal assistance to urban localities for rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities. The law also encourages systematic local planning and commitment to continuing operation and maintenance of recreation programs, sites, and facilities. Only cities and urban counties meeting established criteria are eligible for assistance. Since 2004 funding is at zero, but in the future when Congress makes appropriation for the program it can be a source of funding.
- The Community Foundation of New Jersey (unrestricted funding available)
- African American Experience Fund of the National Park Foundation (historic sites, parks)

## 5.6 Institutional & Historic Preservation Actions

The churches in the Centerville neighborhood are institutions important to the social and civic vitality of the community. These institutions have invested in social services such as childcare and elderly housing development.

The historic heritage of Centerville is very important to the community identity and



recognizing and celebrating it is a goal of this plan.

In addressing these goals, the following are objectives and specific action areas that this plan recommends:

1. Facilitate neighborhood-based institutional growth.
2. Celebrate the African American heritage of the neighborhood.

### Actions

#### 1. Institutional Growth

Church and non-profit investments continue to be encouraged by the City and public/private efforts like the HOPE VI program engage them for growth.

#### 2. Historic Preservation

Centerville should preserve sites of historical significance, such as the fountains and former boxing area in Elijah Perry Park and the historic cemeteries along Ferry Ave. at the eastern edge of the neighborhood.

### Implementation and Funding

The City and the community should seek funding for the preservation, restoration and interpretation of historic sites. One source of funds that is dedicated to African American heritage is the African American Experience Fund of the National Park Foundation - <http://www.aaexperience.org/>.



Churches identified as active in development and providing social services include; Antioch Baptist Church, Ferry Ave. United Methodist Church, and Mt. Olivet 7th Day Adventist Church.



Antioch Baptist Church



Ferry Ave. United Methodist Church



Mt. Olivet 7th-Day Adventist Church