

DRAFT

**Proposed Amendment #7 to the
*Fort Monmouth Reuse and Redevelopment Plan***

Prepared for:
The Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority

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I. Introduction and Planning Rationale

Pursuant to P.L.2010, c. 10 (N.J.S.A. 52:271-18 et. seq.), the Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority (“FMERA”) is considering amending the *Fort Monmouth Reuse and Redevelopment Plan* (the “*Reuse Plan*” and “*Plan*”) to provide the option for an alternative development scenario on a parcel (the “Subject Parcel” “Property”) on the former Fort Monmouth property in the Borough of Oceanport, New Jersey (“Oceanport Reuse Area”) known as the “Fitness Center Parcel”.

The Fitness Center Parcel is a ±7.5 acre parcel of land located in the western section of the Oceanport Reuse Area and is bordered by Saltzman, Brewer, Malterer and Alexander Avenues. It is currently improved with Building #114 which is a ±32,250 square foot fitness center constructed in 1952, as well as Building #562, a New Jersey Natural Gas facility; and Building #752, a Sewage Lift Station. The Property also includes a water tower that is no longer in use.

The *Reuse Plan* envisioned that Building #114 would be reused as a commercial fitness center but is silent on Buildings #562, #752, and the water tower. The Plan also proposes that Razor Drive/North Drive be realigned to create a north-south access between Route 35 in Eatontown and Main Street in Oceanport. This proposal involves the creation of a new roadway extending from the intersection of North Drive and Wilson Avenue in the Fort to Main Street north of Wolfhill Avenue. This new roadway would pass Building #114 to the south. Alexander Avenue, Todd Avenue and Brewer Avenue between Alexander Avenue and the new roadway would be removed.

This amendment would permit the following on the Subject Parcel:

- A privately operated commercial recreation facility¹ (i.e., a fitness center) in Building #114.

¹ **Commercial Recreation Facility** is a subset of retail/commercial uses and is defined as a recreation facility operated as a business and open to the public for a fee for the purpose of recreation and entertainment including, but not limited to, health clubs, bowling alleys, skating rinks, indoor driving ranges, indoor pistol/rifle ranges, indoor batting cages, indoor sports courts, indoor archery ranges, and indoor swimming pools. Commercial recreation facilities could include private recreation clubs, such as health clubs, swimming clubs, pistol/rifle clubs, so long as such clubs are available to any member of the public willing to pay a membership fee. Commercial recreation facilities may include ancillary office areas for staff, training areas, ancillary retail uses, showers, locker rooms and other uses which customarily support the principal use. The regulations in the Land Use Rules for Building Setbacks and Building Height for commercial//retail uses shall apply to commercial recreation facility uses.

- Development of a ±52,750 square foot expansion to Building #114 for use as a commercial recreation facility.
- Maintenance of the existing roadway configurations of Saltzman, Brewer, Todd and Alexander Avenues.
- Retention of the existing water tower adjacent to Building #114. The water tower will not be reused as a water tower but can have a sign painted on it which reads “Fort Monmouth,” “The Borough of Oceanport” or the name of the business operating in Building #114, and/or the logo of any the three. The tower may not be used for telecommunications or other utility services. The tower signage may not be lighted.

The Subject Parcel lies in three development districts as delineated in the Land Use Rules (N.J.A.C. 19:31C-3). For this parcel the bulk requirements for convenience and lifestyle retail uses in Center Districts shall apply. These requirements are as follows:

- Maximum permitted floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.25.
- Maximum permitted height shall be two (2) stories/30 feet.
- Maximum permitted lot coverage of 75 percent.
- Minimum side lot line of 7 feet on each side.
- Minimum rear lot line of 25 feet.

This amendment does not purport to delete any provisions of the *Reuse Plan* but rather would supplement the Plan by proposing alternative development scenarios for the Subject Parcel. Under N.J.A.C. 19:31C-3.19(a)1, principal land uses permitted in the *Reuse Plan* are specifically permitted under the Land Use Rules. Thus, this amendment is incorporated into the Land Use Rules for the Reuse Area in a manner similar to an “overlay zone,” whereby an alternative set of requirements are superimposed on the area allowing for alternative land use scenarios to be realized. With regard to the alternative land use scenario, the overlay zoning provides alternative opportunities for development which do not apply unless the land is developed in accordance with the purposes for which the overlay zoning is adopted.

This amendment is consistent with the planning objectives and principles articulated in the *Reuse Plan* and is necessary to fulfill the Authority’s main objectives—specifically job creation, economic development and the provision of housing. The real estate market has taken a turn for the worse since the *Reuse Plan* was prepared and this downturn has been compounded by the actual closure of Fort Monmouth, which has resulted in the loss of 5,000 jobs on the base and 15,000 supporting jobs in the region. The impacts associated with the base closure relative to the local property tax base and local and regional employment will continue to be felt so long as the former Fort properties remain fallow and unproductive.

The Fort Monmouth *Reuse and Redevelopment Plan* involved years of careful consideration and study as well as an extensive effort to draw input from local residents, the

three host municipalities and the County, State and Federal government. As such, this amendment does not change the underlying Plan vision for the Oceanport Reuse Area. Instead, it provides land use options that affords FMERA with the necessary flexibility to respond to changed circumstances in a manner that does not compromise the overall *Reuse Plan* goals and objectives.

The following chapter describes the nature and scope of the amendment, while succeeding chapters discuss its relationship to the elements, objectives and planning principles of the *Reuse Plan*, as well as to FMERA's own directive, and to relevant State, County and municipal planning objectives.

II. Scope of *Reuse Plan* Amendment

The Fort Monmouth properties in Oceanport total approximately 419 acres and are bounded generally by New Jersey Transit's North Jersey Coast Line, Main Street and Oceanport Creek to the south, Parkers Creek to the north, and the former Fort properties in Eatontown to the west. The *Reuse Plan* envisions redevelopment of this area for approximately 1.75 million square feet of non-residential space and 720 residential units. Such development would include: a high-tech/green industry cluster, education/medical campus, a neighborhood center, a boutique hotel and spa, and expansive green space including the historic Parade Ground.

The Fitness Center Parcel is a 7.75 acre parcel of land in the western section of the Oceanport Reuse Area. It is surrounded on four sides by roadways: Saltzman Avenue to the north, Brewer Avenue to the west, Todd Avenue to the east, and Alexander Avenue to the south. The parcel has three buildings on it: Building #114 ("Fitness Center") which is a ±32,250 square foot building constructed in 1952; Building #562, a New Jersey Natural Gas facility which is ±362 square foot structure constructed in 1941; and Building #752, a Sewage Lift Station which was also constructed in 1941. The Property also includes a water tower that is no longer in use. Most of the parcel south of the Fitness Center comprises lawn area. The Fitness Center building includes a 10,000 square foot gymnasium, 25-meter pool, two handball/racquetball courts, free weight room, fitness rooms, locker rooms and other support functions.

The *Reuse Plan* envisions reuse of Building #114 for commercial recreation facility purposes (i.e., as a fitness center) but is silent on Building #562, Building #752 and the water tower. The Plan also proposes that Razor Drive/North Drive be realigned to create a north-south access between Route 35 in Eatontown and Main Street in Oceanport. This proposal involves the creation of a new roadway extending from the intersection of North Drive and Wilson Avenue in the Fort to Main Street north of Wolfhill Avenue. This new roadway would pass Building #114 to the south. Alexander Avenue, Todd Avenue and Brewer Avenue between Alexander Avenue and the new roadway would be removed.

This amendment to the *Reuse Plan* continues to contemplate the reuse of Building #114 for commercial recreation facility purposes (i.e., as a fitness center). However, this amendment permits development of a ±52,750 square foot expansion to Building #114 for use as a commercial recreation facility and the maintenance of the water tower. The water tower will not be reused as a water tower but can have a sign painted on it which reads "Fort Monmouth," "The Borough of Oceanport" or the name of the business operating in Building #114, and/or the logo of any the three. The tower may not be used for telecommunications or other utility services. The tower signage may not be lighted. Finally, this amendment envisions maintaining the existing roadway configurations of Saltzman, Brewer, Todd and Alexander Avenues.

The Subject Parcel lies in three development districts as delineated in the Land Use Rules (N.J.A.C. 19:31C-3). For this parcel the bulk requirements for convenience and lifestyle retail uses in Center Districts shall apply. These requirements are as follows:

- Maximum permitted floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.25.
- Maximum permitted height shall be two (2) stories/30 feet.
- Maximum permitted lot coverage of 75 percent.
- Minimum side lot line of 7 feet on each side.
- Minimum rear lot line of 25 feet.

Please see *Figure 1: Location of Amendment #7 in the Oceanport Reuse Area* which shows the location of this amendment in the context of the larger Oceanport Reuse Area. Please also see *Figure 2: Detailed View of Amendment #7 in the Oceanport Reuse Area* which focuses on the Subject Parcel. This amendment maintains the development concepts and plans articulated in the Reuse Plan.



★ SEE FIGURE 2 FOR ENLARGEMENT OF FIVERA PARCELS

6 FIGURE 1 | Location of AMENDMENT #7 in the Oceanport Reuse Area

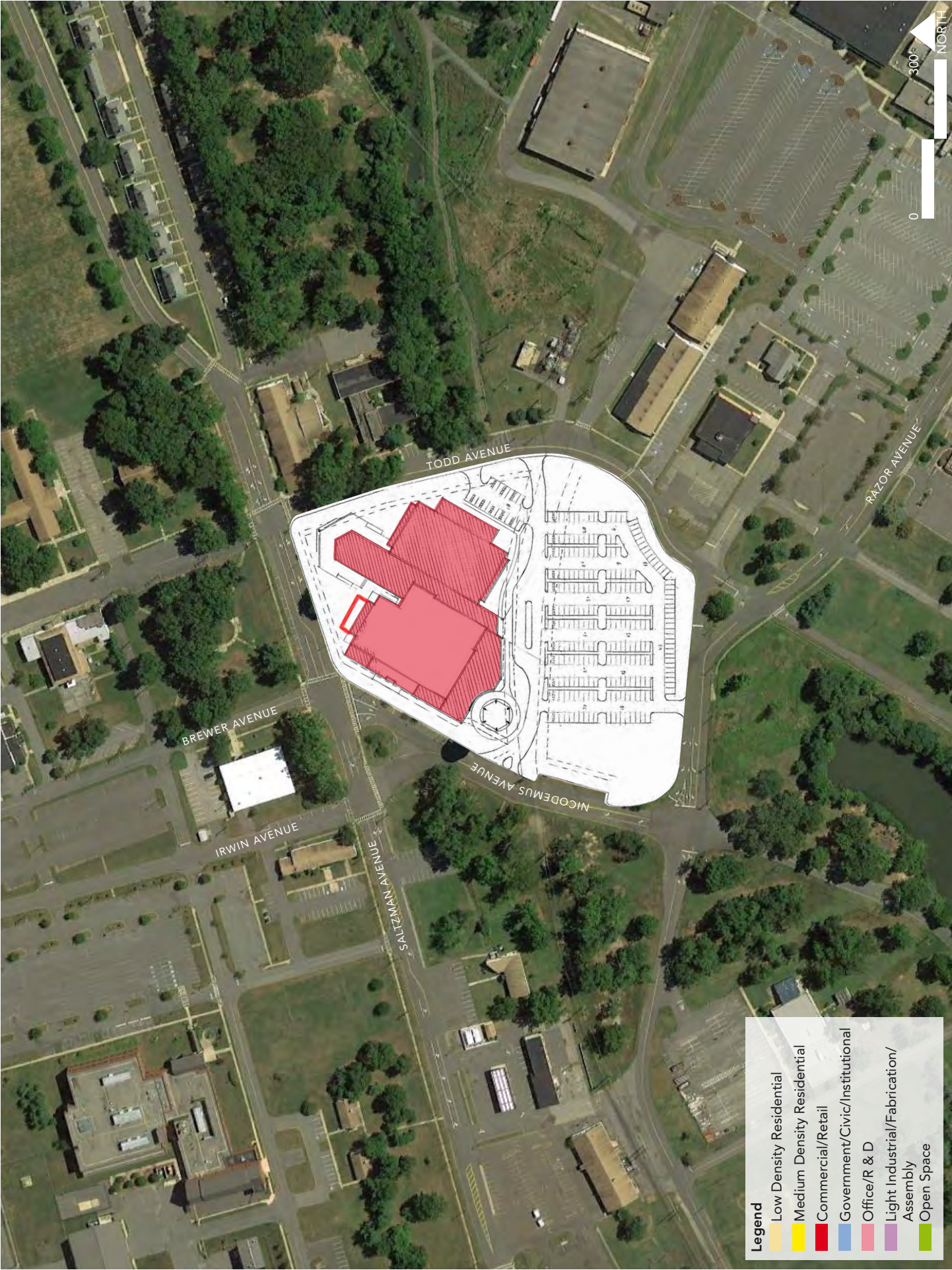


FIGURE 2 | Detailed View of AMENDMENT #7 in the Oceanport Reuse Area
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III. Relationship to Elements, Objectives and Principles of the *Reuse Plan* and FMERA Directive

Relationship to Reuse and Redevelopment Plan Elements

In considering the impacts of the *Reuse Plan* amendment, the following *Reuse Plan* elements were considered: land use and circulation, infrastructure, environmental issues, historic preservation and community impacts. The relationship between the amendment and these Plan elements are described below.

Land Use and Circulation

Total Non-Residential Square Footage Yield

This amendment continues to allow for the reuse of the ±32,250 Fitness Center as a private health club (i.e., a commercial recreation facility use). As compared to the *Reuse Plan*, this amendment would permit an additional ±52,750 square feet of commercial recreation facility in the form of an expansion of Building #114. This amendment would also allow for the retention of the nearby water tower with the possibility of signage painted on the tower. As such, the water tower will not add any additional square footage to the Fort's redevelopment yield).

Total Residential Development Yield

This amendment permits 720 residential dwelling units, which is the same number of residential units as was contemplated in the *Reuse Plan* and subsequent amendments to the Oceanport Reuse Area.

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses

The uses contemplated in this amendment are compatible with the surrounding land uses anticipated in the *Reuse Plan* and subsequent amendments. The Fitness Center was contemplated for reuse as a fitness center (i.e., a commercial recreation facility) in the *Reuse Plan*. The expanded fitness center contemplated in this amendment will be separated from any adjacent land uses by roadways. The maintenance of the water tower, which has been at this location for many years, is not expected to have any impact on surrounding land uses. The tower signage may read "Fort Monmouth," "The Borough of Oceanport" or the name of the business operating in Building #114, and/or the logo of any the three. The tower may not be used for telecommunications or other utility services. The tower signage may not be lighted.

Circulation

The roadway configurations contemplated in this amendment are consistent with and would not otherwise compromise any of the “Transportation Circulation Improvement Goals” established in the *Reuse Plan*.

The *Reuse Plan* proposes that Razor Drive/North Drive be realigned to create a north-south access between Route 35 in Eatontown and Main Street in Oceanport. This proposal involves the creation of a new roadway extending from the intersection of North Drive and Wilson Avenue to Main Street north of Wolfhill Avenue. This new roadway would pass the Fitness Center to the south. Alexander Avenue, Todd Avenue and Brewer Avenue between Alexander Avenue and the new roadway would be removed. This amendment contemplates maintaining the existing configuration of Saltzman, Brewer, Todd and Alexander Avenues. This does not preclude the creation of a north-south access between Route 35 and Main Street to another location than was envisioned in the Plan. As such, this amendment would not adversely impact any of the “Transportation Circulation Improvement Goals” established in the *Reuse Plan*.

Open Space

The reuse and expansion of Building #114 for a commercial recreation facility would not impact any active recreation or open space contemplated in the *Reuse Plan*.

Sustainability

This amendment would not preclude incorporation of any of the sustainability measures outlined in the *Reuse Plan*, and is consistent with all other development contemplated on the former Fort properties. Specifically, preservation and reuse of the Fitness Center (including the water tower), and the maintenance of the roadways which currently serve these buildings would further the plan’s green building sustainability goal to “Maximize the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure.” (*Reuse Plan, page 4-15*)

Infrastructure

As indicated in the *Reuse Plan*, impacts on the existing gas, electric, water, wastewater and telephone utilities servicing Fort Monmouth will have to be evaluated at site plan review for a specific project. This assessment is unaffected by the amendment.

Traffic

Building #114 will be reused as a commercial recreation facility as contemplated in the *Reuse Plan*. There may be a minimal increase in traffic generated by the additional square footage associated with the expansion to Building #114. An increase in non-residential square footage on the Fitness Center Parcel over that which was contemplated in the *Reuse Plan* may be offset by a decrease in total non-residential square footage on other parcels in the Oceanport Reuse Area. A detailed traffic analysis would be prepared as part of any site plan review related to the reuse and/or development of this parcel. Any necessary traffic mitigation would be addressed at that time.

Environmental Issues

The parcel permitted to be developed by this amendment is not environmentally constrained per Geographic Information System (GIS) layers provided by the New Jersey Department of Environment Protection (NJDEP). Any environmentally constrained areas within the Fitness Center Parcel would be preserved and protected accordingly.

Historic Preservation

Building #114 is not part of the Fort Monmouth Historic District and is not listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The reuse of the Fitness Center is not expected to have any adverse impacts on the Fort's historic resources.

Community Impacts and Affordable Housing

As noted in the *Reuse Plan*, the host communities, including Oceanport, rely on taxation for the largest portion of their municipal revenues. The Fort's closure, and the resulting loss of Defense contractor jobs is expected to result in a larger share of the tax burden falling to residential property owners. The potential offered by this amendment to increase non-residential tax rates would therefore lessen the burden on local residents.

Commercial/retail uses contemplated for the Fitness Center Parcel in this amendment typically generate more positive fiscal impacts on a municipality, i.e., generate more tax revenues than incur municipal costs, than do other land uses, including residential development. Additional non-residential square footage on the Subject Parcel can be expected to have a positive fiscal impact on the tax base of Oceanport. These uses would not generate any school children and the municipal costs associated per new employee, as indicated in the *Reuse Plan*, is almost 30 percent less than municipal costs associated per new resident in Oceanport.

Because no change in the total residential development yield is envisioned, there would be no direct impact on the construction of affordable housing as envisioned in the *Reuse Plan*.

Relationship to Objectives and Principles of the Reuse Plan

The amendment would fulfill the objectives and planning principles outlined in the *Reuse Plan*. Those planning objectives articulated in the *Reuse Plan* include the following:

- *Be consistent with State, County, and Municipal planning policies.* The amendment is consistent with State, County, and Municipal planning policies, as set forth in the ensuing chapter.
- *Focus on business retention and attraction, job replacement, and employee training.* This amendment would provide for increased flexibility to aid FMERA in its efforts to attract suitable businesses who wish to relocate to Fort Monmouth and which have the potential to replace jobs lost when the Fort closed.
- *Be founded on market and economic analysis.* This amendment responds to the marketplace by permitting an alternative development scenario designed to attract non-residential users to the Oceanport Reuse Area.
- *Leverage Fort assets (people, infrastructure, location).* The amendment affords FMERA with an opportunity to leverage existing assets within the Oceanport Reuse Area, i.e., Building #114 to attract new non-residential uses that generate much-needed local employment and tax ratables.
- *Be a green community model.* Preservation of Building #114 and the maintenance of the roadways which currently serve them furthers the Plan's green building sustainability goal to "Maximize the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure." (*Reuse Plan, page 4-15*)

The amendment further advances a number of key planning principles from which the overall concepts in the *Reuse Plan* were devised:

Principle #1: Decreasing Density West to East & Creating Mixed-Use Live/Work/Leisure Centers. The amendment contemplates the reuse of a building which has been in existence at this location for many years in a manner that promotes these planning principles.

Principle #2: Link centers & increase mobility with connected transit infrastructure serving the region and the Fort. The amendment does not preclude the potential to create an extensive system of bikeways, pedestrian trails and sidewalks as envisioned in the *Reuse Plan*.

- Principle #3: Enhance auto mobility and redevelopment capacity with targeted roadway infrastructure improvements.* This amendment does not preclude the enhancement of auto mobility and redevelopment capacity with targeted roadway infrastructure improvements as set forth in the *Reuse Plan*.
- Principle #4: Combine open space, habitat, and water resources to establish a continuous Blue – Green belt.* The amendment does not preclude the creation of an open space network consisting of environmentally sensitive areas, including wetlands, watercourses, and habitats.
- Principle #5: Utilize the Blue – Green belt as an armature for enhanced bicycle and pedestrian mobility throughout the Fort.* The amendment would not preclude the development of the bike path or trails envisioned as part of the *Reuse Plan*.
- Principle #6: Remove Fort boundaries & extend existing land uses to reconnect the Fort to the communities.* The amendment would not prevent the opening of any gates into the Fort, nor inhibit public access to the Fort's amenities.
- Principle #7: Leverage existing Fort Monmouth assets (People, Buildings, Technology, and Infrastructure).* The amendment affords FMERA with an opportunity to leverage existing assets of the Oceanport Reuse Area, i.e., Building #114, to attract new office users that generate much-needed local employment and tax ratables. The amendment would not involve the removal of any buildings identified in the *Reuse Plan* as being required for preservation.

In summary, the amendment is consistent with the *Reuse Plan* elements, objectives and planning principles.

Relationship to FMERA Directive

To implement the *Fort Monmouth Reuse and Redevelopment Plan*, the New Jersey State legislature empowered the Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority (FMERA) to adopt any modifications or amendments to the *Reuse Plan* and adopt development and design guidelines and land use regulations to implement the plan.

Pursuant to P.L.2010, c. 10 (N.J.S.A. 52:27I-18 et. seq.), FMERA's purpose is the following:

to oversee, administer, and implement the [Reuse Plan] as provided in this act, in a manner that will promote, develop, encourage, and maintain employment, commerce, economic development, and the public welfare; to conserve the natural resources of the State; to provide housing, including hous-

ing to address identified needs related to homelessness; and to advance the general prosperity and economic welfare of the people in the host municipalities, the county, and the entire State by cooperating and acting in conjunction with other organizations, public and private, to promote and advance the economic use of the facilities located at Fort Monmouth.

The *Reuse Plan* amendment would advance both FMERA's stated purpose and the public welfare, by promoting, developing, encouraging and maintaining employment and economic development, and it would advance the public welfare by furthering the adaptive reuse of an existing facility and roadway network at the Fort.

IV. Relationship to State, County and Municipal Planning Objectives

State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP)

On March 1, 2001, the State Planning Commission readopted the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP). In the SDRP, the Oceanport Reuse Area is classified as Planning Area 1, Metropolitan Planning Area (PA-1). The SDRP defines Metropolitan Planning Areas as areas which “provide for much of the state’s future redevelopment; revitalize cities and towns; promote growth in compact forms; stabilize older suburbs; redesign areas of sprawl; and protect the character of existing stable communities.” The amendment is well-reconciled with the guiding policies and policy objectives of the adopted SDRP for the Planning Area 1, Metropolitan Planning Area.

Consistent with the goals for the PA-1, the amendment promotes the type of redevelopment needed to transform the Oceanport Reuse Area, currently largely unused and unproductive, into a vibrant, mixed-use community with compact development that will ensure efficient utilization of scarce land resources while also carefully protecting the character of surrounding communities. Also in accordance with the objectives for PA-1, the amendment allows for redevelopment in a location well served by existing transportation networks which is consistent with the plans for the Oceanport Reuse Area.

Monmouth County Open Space Plan

The Monmouth County Open Space Plan, adopted by the Monmouth County Planning Board in August 2006 as an element of the Monmouth County Growth Management Guide, specifically advocates the acquisition of a portion of the Fort Monmouth property as a new County park site. To fulfill this acquisition, Monmouth County filed a Notice of Interest for park and recreation lands within Fort Monmouth. The County subsequently filed an application to the National Park Service’s Federal Lands to Park Program for a Public Benefit Conveyance, which was endorsed by the three host municipalities of Eatontown, Oceanport and Tinton Falls. Building #114 was part of the County application. The County proposed that the building remain in use as a fitness center which would be operated by the County. Although this amendment does not anticipate the County operating the fitness center, the amendment is not inconsistent with the County’s goals for the facility to be reused as a fitness center.

Fort to Village Plan: A Vision for Oceanport’s Fort Monmouth

The former Fort properties in Oceanport are included within the “master plan” for Fort Monmouth, i.e., the *Reuse and Redevelopment Plan*. However, a vision for the redevelopment of the fort is provided in ***Fort to Village Plan: A Vision for Oceanport’s Fort***

Monmouth. This document was incorporated as an amendment to the Master Plan which was adopted by the Oceanport Planning Board on April 23, 2008. The plan acknowledged that the County had requested the Fitness Center as part of its application to the National Park Service's Federal Lands to Park Program for a Public Benefit Conveyance. The amendment is generally consistent with that vision articulated in the *Fort to Village* Plan as it contemplates the reuse of Building #114 as a fitness center. However, the plan anticipated that Building #114 would be operated by the County. As such, this amendment is not inconsistent with the plan's proposal for this area of the Fort.

Oceanport Zoning

Although the development of the former Fort properties in Oceanport will be governed by the land use regulations and design guidelines adopted by FMERA, as a point of information, the study area lies within the Borough's R-1: Single-Family Residential District under the municipality's current zone plan. This designation represents permits single-family detached dwellings, parks and playgrounds, municipal buildings, libraries and public schools. The minimum lot size is 30,000 square feet, the maximum height is two stories or thirty-five feet and the maximum density is 1.5 dwelling units per acre.

The amendment is generally consistent with the Borough's intent for the Oceanport Re-use Area.

V. Conclusion

The subject amendment, referred to as Amendment #7 to the *Fort Monmouth Reuse and Redevelopment Plan*, maintains the land use concepts and plans articulated in the *Reuse Plan*. However, the amendment permits alternative development scenarios for the Oceanport Reuse Area.

This amendment is consistent with the objectives and principles in the *Reuse Plan*, as well as State, County and Municipal planning objectives. Furthermore, the amendment advances the public welfare, particularly with regard to promoting, developing, encouraging and maintaining employment. Lastly, the amendment provides flexibility for FMERA to more effectively attract potential non-residential users to the Oceanport Reuse Area, thereby enabling it to fulfill its statutory mandate to create new jobs, regenerate the local tax base and advance the general prosperity and welfare of the people most impacted by the Fort's closure.