

LAND USE AND OPEN SPACE

MUNICIPAL LAND USE

The 2011 Borough of Hawthorne Master Plan Reexamination Report and Land Use Plan Update is part of a continuing comprehensive planning effort that has been undertaken by the Borough over the past several decades (Burgis, 2011). In 1968, the Borough adopted its first comprehensive master plan. Since that time, the Borough Planning Board adopted Periodic Reexamination Reports on August 3, 1982, August 16, 1988, July 19, 1994, and most recently, on December 19, 2000.

The Municipal Land Use is guided by a municipality's Master Plan. The General Plan for the Borough of Hawthorne was adopted in 1968 followed by adoption of the Master Plan in October 1978 with updates every six years. The 1994 Master Plan acknowledges that less than 10% of privately owned land remains vacant and available for development, so that the principal concern is to promote and encourage the continued upkeep and maintenance of existing uses in the best possible condition.

The predominant land use in the Borough of Hawthorne is one and two family residential dwellings located in residential neighborhoods. Historically, residential development in Hawthorne was single-family residences. During the 1990's most new residential development was condominium and townhouse subdivisions.

The business area of Hawthorne is primarily located within a central business district along Lafayette Avenue and Diamond Bridge Avenue and extending into residential districts. The area at the intersection of Lafayette Avenue and Goffle Road north to Wyckoff is a secondary business section.

Industrial uses have been a primary ingredient in the development of Hawthorne. The initial industrial development followed the NYS&W freight railroad right-of-way through the center of town. The other primary industrial area was located along the Passaic River providing access to unlimited water and disposal.

DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

In the 2011 Reexamination Report, the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan was adopted by the Planning Board on July 20, 2004 (Burgis, 2011). The Housing Element and Fair Share Plan was adopted by the Planning Board on June 16, 2009. This plan element reexamined the Borough's ability to meet its COAH-determined rehabilitation share of 34 units, 1987-1999 cumulative prior- round obligation of 58 low and moderate income units, and its Third Round growth share obligation for the period of 2004-2018 of 230 units.

The Borough adopted a Housing Plan and Fair Share Element indicating there is less than an acre of developable vacant land remaining in the Borough. Hawthorne is a fully developed community with the only possible future development occurring in the form of redevelopment. This imposes a new set of planning issues for the Borough to address as part of its master planning efforts.

In the 1994 update of the Housing Element the Master plan 62 parcels are listed as vacant land in the Borough of which 33 are environmentally sensitive and 29 not suitable for inclusionary development (Burgis Assoc. 1994). Most of these remaining tracts of land contain sever environmental constraints such as steep slopes and wetlands which make them difficult to develop. There continue, however, to be proposals for new land developments on some of these properties. To provide guidance and protect public safety and health the Borough of Hawthorne has adopted several environmental ordinances to the zoning rules, this includes a steep slope ordinance.

In the 1994 update of the Housing Element, the cumulative total of these 62 parcels of vacant land is 25.99 acres; most of the properties are very small, less than one acre in size. This accounts for 10.25 acres. The remaining 15.75 acres consists of three properties that have environmental constraints. As a comparison in 1968 there were 339 acres of vacant land, or 14.6% of the total land area in the Hawthorne (Candeub 1968). The existing 25.99 acres comprise a little more than 1% of the total land area.

The greatest land use issue in 2000 was the future of 30 acres of former industrial land located along the Passaic River. In December 2004, a redevelopment study of the Wagaraw Road area had begun to provide reasonable development opportunities in this section of Hawthorne to balance the needs of the Borough, neighborhood and adjacent landowners (**Fig. 21**). The site's two properties have historically been a center of industrial activity and are currently undergoing remediation, ultimately becoming viable for redevelopment.

The 2004 Study covers approximately 216 acres in the borough, roughly 10% of the total Hawthorne land area. Of this area, twelve Brownfield sites which are defined as former industrial or commercial land that is contaminated. The study found six points of notability for the municipality after research:

- Some buildings are unsafe, unsanitary, substandard, dilapidated, or obsolescent for living or working conditions
- Abandonment of buildings where they come to a state of no longer being tenatable such as former Pyrolac Corporation & former Calgon Corporation
- Several municipally-owned & unimproved vacant lands that contain several physical disadvantages for development which are not likely to be developed through private capital
- Dilapidation of buildings are threatening the communities' well-being
- Lack of proper utilization of land area
- The plan for redevelopment be consistent with smart growth principals adopted as law or regulation

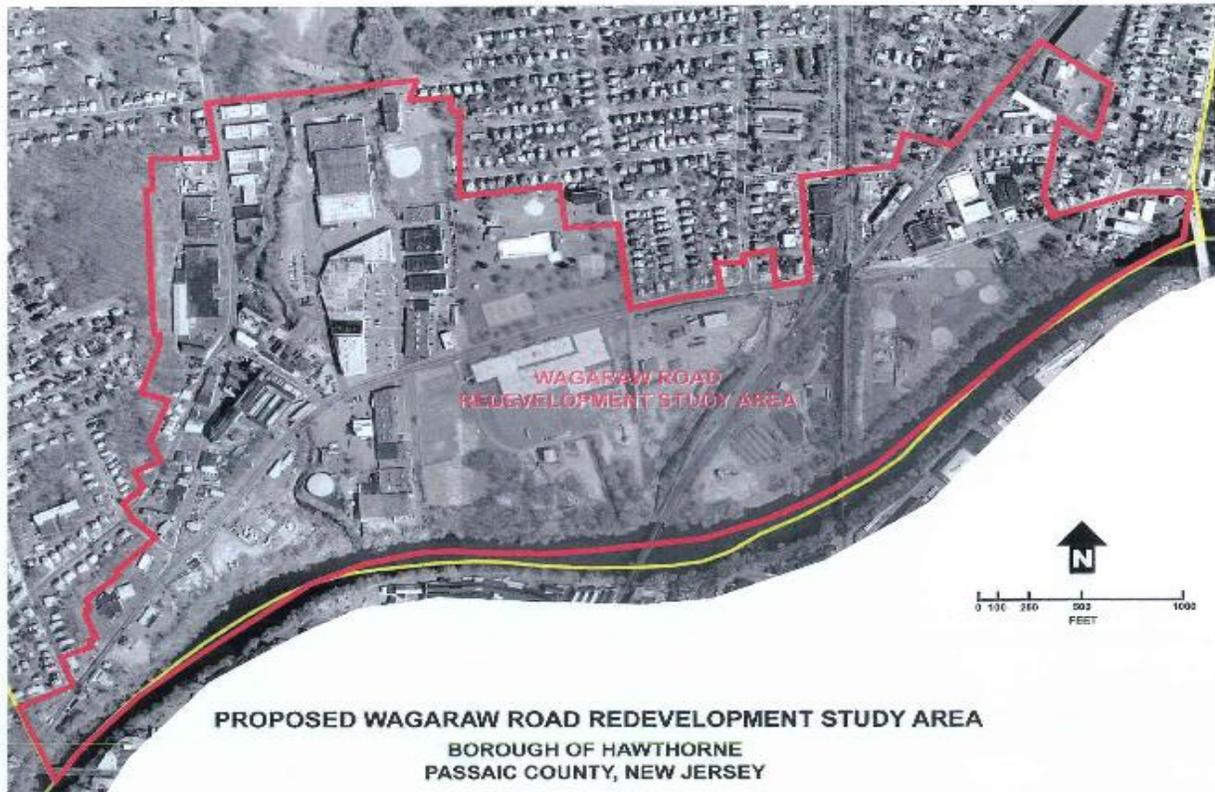


Fig. 21. Map of Proposed Wagaraw Road Redevelopment Study Area

One aspect of the redevelopment plan has been shown through the redevelopment of the former BASF & Calgon Site into a commercial distribution center, Kohler Distribution, completed in 2004.

After thirteen years of planning and wrangling, ground was finally broken for the commencement of construction at 204 Wagaraw Road on May 29, 2021 (Bedrin 2021). The Bedrin Organization, which owns the Hawthorne Center (known informally to some locals as “The Rag Shop Center”) at 111 Wagaraw Road, will finally see their goals of developing the 204 Wagaraw site realized.

The area, an approximately 8.8 acre stretch of land just south of Wagaraw Road against the Passaic River, had been proposed as the site of a Kohl’s and a Wal-Mart supermarket before its current incarnation as a mixed residential-retail site.

The project will have 118 units of residential apartment complex, a gym and two retail spaces, and a third building that will offer self-storage. The facilities have been carefully designed to accommodate the requirements of the borough and input from locals.

Other potential redevelopment sites include the Pan Chemical property on Washington Avenue adjacent to the New Jersey Transit Main Line parking lot and the Pyrolac Corporation located on Schoon Avenue. These properties are currently located in the

Industrial Zone but could potentially be redeveloped as administrative office, commercial, or public parking lots.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

The Borough of Hawthorne contains approximately 170 acres of public open space for passive and active recreation and environmental protection. Of this total, about 50 acres are municipally owned, and the majority is used as active recreation facilities. The following list of open space is identified on **Fig. 22** Open Space and Recreation Map.

PASSAIC COUNTY

A. Goffle Brook Park. One of the most recognizable features of Hawthorne is the 90-acre Passaic County greenway park along Goffle Brook. The prestigious Olmsted Brothers Landscape Firm designed Goffle Brook Park during the early stages of the creation of the Passaic County Park System. The park was established for passive recreation and to provide environmental protection, preserving the floodplain and wetlands of the Goffle Brook and creating a buffer between the waterbody and the growing community. The park contains a former millpond, picnic areas and pastoral scenic vistas, and active recreation facilities, such as, baseball/softball fields, soccer fields, a playground and a dog run. Passaic County was in the process of developing a pedestrian & bike pathway along Goffle Brook that will connect the park to the Passaic River, but Passaic County Planning did not pursue planning.

BOROUGH OF HAWTHORNE

B. Hawthorne Municipal Pool and Tennis Courts. This 10-acre property located on Wagaraw Road is Hawthorne's primary recreation complex. The property contains an outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts, baseball/softball field and a passive recreation area.

C. Wagaraw Road Fields. This 12-acre property is located on Wagaraw Road adjacent to the Passaic River. The property is a baseball/softball complex with three fields and a concession stand. The site also contains the municipal recycling facility and a passive recreation area along the Passaic River waterfront.

On August 15, 2020, Hawthorne Environmental Commission, Hawthorne Green, and Borough of Hawthorne held a grand opening for the Gateway to the Passaic River project. This project enhanced an existing walkway to access the Passaic River that can be enjoyed by the residents of Hawthorne and Passaic County for fishing and recreation activities, such as kayaking, canoeing and small boats. Additionally, two (2) rain gardens were installed to capture storm water sheet flow from a parking lot, which is situated between the Hawthorne ballfields and the Passaic River. The Hawthorne Environmental Commission and Hawthorne Green Team members along with borough employees, private companies, members of the Shade Tree Commission – Hawthorne's Arborists, as well as Boy Scouts, and other civic minded people of the community worked to build and complete project successful.

The "Gateway to the Passaic River" project provided an opportunity to enhance and promote Hawthorne's waterfront open space; the importance of utilizing native plants of New Jersey; and increasing Hawthorne's biodiversity. Lastly, this project promoted the

aesthetics of the Passaic River and provide current and future generations the opportunity to enjoy fishing and water recreation activities. (Boro Website's Green Infrastructure, 2020)

D. Pumphouse Field. The former Pumphouse Field is a single six acre baseball/softball field located on the Borough's Department of Public Works complex on Goffle Road. In 2013, the 9/11 Memorial was built in dedication to Salvatore J Zisa, Hawthorne resident. The memorial inscription stated "In Loving Memory: "We will never forget.", Salvatore J Zisa, 9-11-01.

On the 12th anniversary of the terroristic events of 9/11 Hawthorne unveiled its planned tribute of remembrance and honor to the men, women, and children killed in the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 and recognition of the efforts of those who responded in it's aftermath. The borough received a 24-foot beam from the World Trade Center in 2011. The beam is now placed in the memorial, located at 970 Goffle Road between the Hawthorne Volunteer Ambulance Corps building and Fire Rescue 5 headquarters.

The memorial centered around the beam includes four granite monuments representing the public and the three branches of emergency services – police fire and ambulance corps. The memorial for Sal Zisa Jr., the only Hawthorne resident who perished in the 9/11 attacks, was also relocated to the new location with the steel beam. The four granite monuments were unveiled by the Hawthorne fire department, police department, ambulance corps and Ed McGuirk, a Hawthorne resident who escaped from one of the towers, to represent the public.

In 2014, Hawthorne Community Garden was built adjacent to the 9/11 Memorial. There are a total of sixteen (16) garden beds available to Hawthorne residents.

E. Eight Acre Woods. The Eight Acre Woods is an 8-acre conservation/natural area located adjacent to Goffle Brook Park. The natural area protects a small wetland area and woodland that is a sanctuary to wildlife. It is also a popular bird watching spot.

F. McFarlan Avenue Open Space. This property is an 8-acre conservation/natural area that protects a wooded steep slope along the front edge of the First Watchung.

G. Rhodes Park – The land for Rhodes Park was donated by a local builder, Mr. VanderZee, who built many of the houses in the surrounding area. It is approximately 1.2 acres. His intention, when he donated the land, was that the land be forever used by the borough as an open park land forever.

H. Veterans' Field. On May 30th, 2009, a 3 acre soccer field opened up on the former BASF & Calgon Site site. The land is primarily used for soccer and currently undergoing lighting improvements.

I. Franklin Fields. These fields are split up into two sections. The first section is 1.32 acres and is located behind the Hawthorne Public Pool and is used for recreational activities. The second section is 2 acres lot located next to the Boys & Girls Club and contains a football stadium.

J. Pocket Park – Borough of Hawthorne is leasing a corner pocket of land, approximately 1,200 square feet, at the corner of Diamond Bridge Avenue and Lafayette Avenue. The pocket park was made possible through donations from: The Mele family, The Ruta Family, Edward A. Easse Architect; Hawthorne Lions Club, Field of Dreams, John Lane, Kevin Russell, Friends of Marcus Ruta, Bill Post, Rose Conklin, Hawthorne Water Dept., Downes Tree Service and Rousseau's Nursery.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Hawthorne Board of Education maintains five schools, of which four contain noteworthy recreational facilities – approximately 30 acres total. The Washington School, Roosevelt School, and Jefferson School each contain a playground area and baseball/softball field and play areas. The Hawthorne High School has a substantial recreational complex, which is adjacent to Goffle Brook Park. The recreation complex includes a football field, running track, baseball fields, hockey rink, and basketball court.

K. Hawthorne High School – approximately 9.4 acres

L. Roosevelt Elementary School – approximately 8.4 acres

M. Washington Elementary School – approximately 2.7 acres

N. Jefferson Elementary School – approximately 8.4 acres

Fig. 22. Map of Open Space and Recreation in the Borough of Hawthorne.

