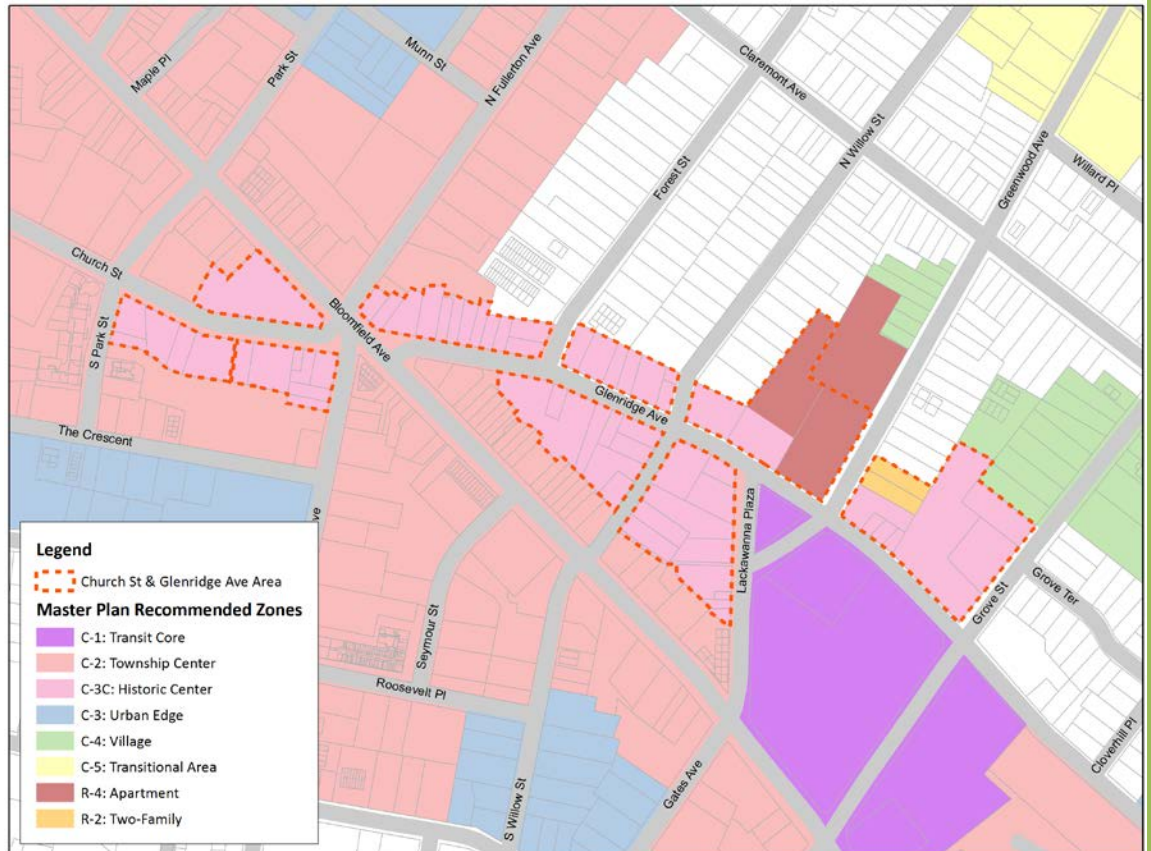


Amendment to the Land Use and Circulation Element of the Master Plan Glenridge Avenue and Church Street



Prepared for:

**Montclair Township Planning Board
205 Claremont Avenue
Montclair, NJ 07042**

Prepared by:

**Montclair Township Department of Planning and
Community Development**

Adopted February 8, 2016

The original of this report has been signed and sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 13:41-1.2.

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INTRODUCTION

The Montclair Township Planning Board has reviewed the recommendations in the 2015 Unified Land Use and Circulation Plan along Glenridge Avenue and Church Street and recommends a new land use designation for this area that deviates from the recommendations in the adopted plan. This area includes properties on the north and south side of Church Street between South Park Street to the west and Bloomfield Avenue to the east. The study area continues eastward along Glenridge Avenue from Bloomfield Avenue to Grove Street, including select properties along the north and south side of Glenridge Avenue. In addition, the area includes some properties along North Willow Street and Lackawanna Plaza to the south of Glenridge Avenue.

In total, the area is approximately 14.1 acres in size and includes 65 tax lots. Below is a map of the area that was evaluated. Condominium units are not shown on the tax map.



Figure 1 - Tax map of the study area, outlined in orange

EXISTING LAND USE

This area is largely commercial in nature, with 28 properties containing commercial uses as shown in Figure 2. There are seven mixed-use properties that contain a combination of commercial and residential uses, eight vacant properties, two properties containing charitable/church uses, and four public-use properties.

There are a total of 133 residential units within the area. The property at the corner of Glenridge Avenue and Greenwood Avenue (Block 3208, Lot 37) contains Union Gardens, a multi-family building that contains 87 residential units. Two smaller properties on the east side of Greenwood Avenue include a 2-1/2-story residential building and a vacant lot that is currently used for parking.

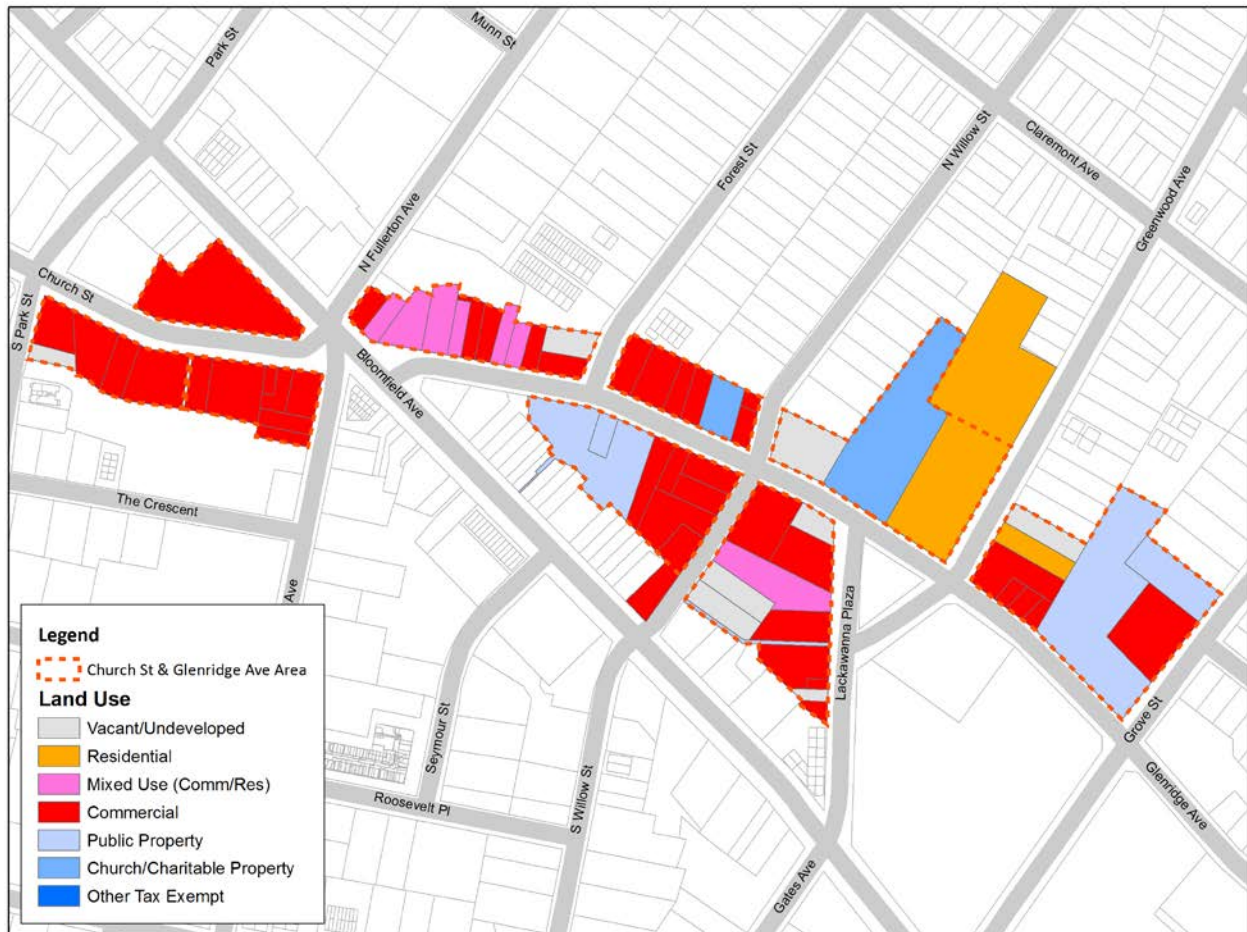


Figure 2 - Land use map of the study area.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

The study area is well served by a variety of mobility options, including bus and rail, in addition to multiple parking areas. Portions of the study area along Glenridge Avenue to the east of the intersection with Bloomfield Avenue are within a 10 minute walk from the Walnut Street and Bay Street train stations.

The area is also well served by bus service along Bloomfield Avenue. NJ Transit Routes 11, 28, 29 and 34 provide service along Bloomfield Avenue, seven days a week. In addition, each of these routes provides frequent bus service; defined as bus service with a maximum 20-minute headway (time between buses) during peak rush hour (7am to 9am and 4pm to 6pm).

Finally, a municipal parking lot, the Midtown Parking Lot is located within the study area. In addition, there are two commercially-operated parking lots located on the eastern side of North Willow Street within the study area.



Figure 3 - A map of mobility options in the study area

EXISTING ZONING

The study area is located entirely within the C-1: Central Business – Center Area zone district. The C-1 zone district permits 6-story buildings, with a maximum building height of 67 feet and a maximum density of 55 units per acre. The 6-story building height is not consistent with the building heights in this area, which range between one and three stories.

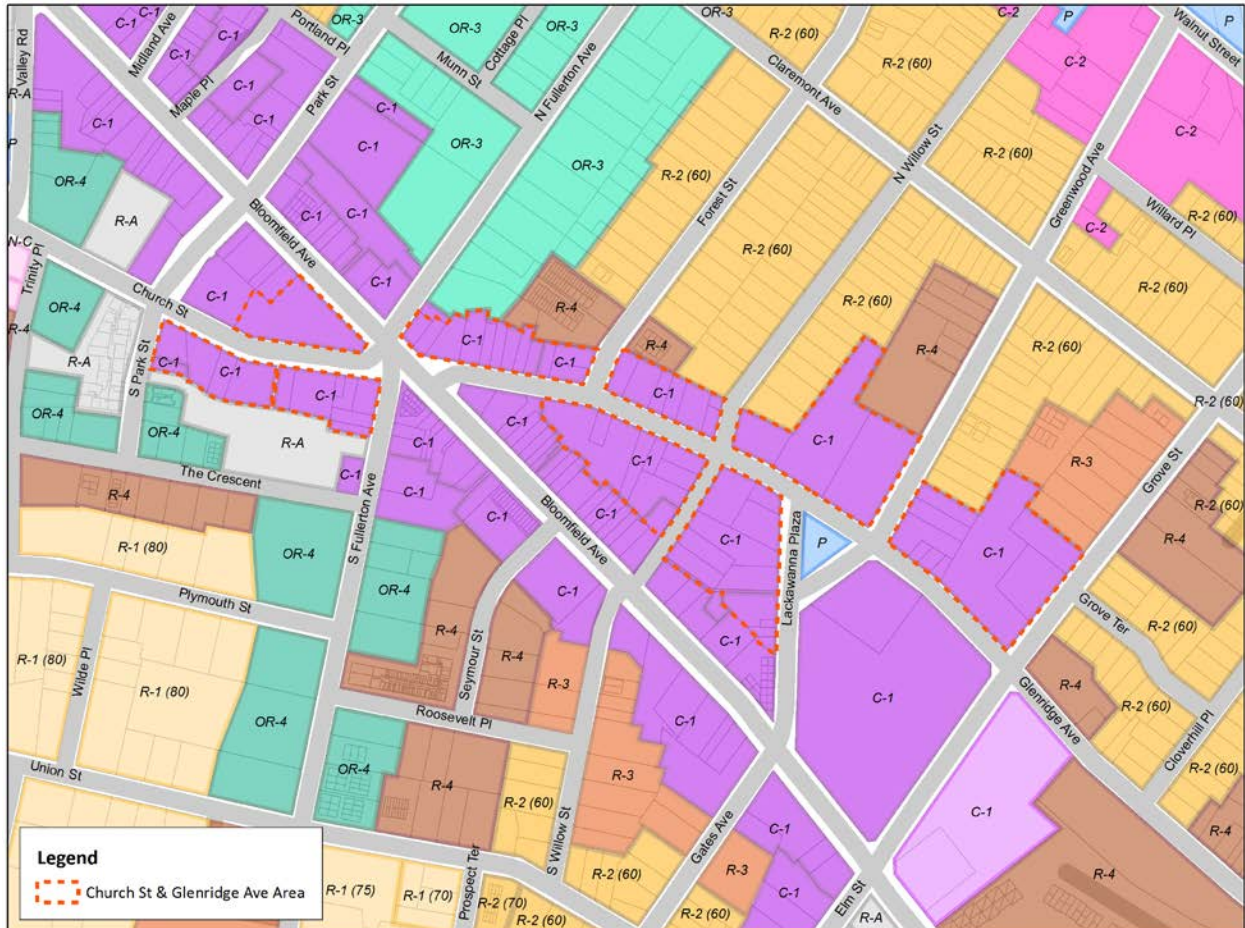


Figure 4 - A map of existing zoning in the study area and vicinity.

EXISTING RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

Density is defined as the number of dwelling units per acre of lot area. The study area includes nine lots that have a residential use component. Two of these nine lots are exclusively residential; Lot 37 in Block 3208 and Lot 2 in Block 3212. All of the remaining lots with a residential use also have a commercial/retail use on site as well. The existing density of the residential uses in the area varies widely, ranging between a low of 11 units per acre to a high of 86 units per acre. The average existing density is 37 du/acre.

Block	Lot	Property Address	Residential Units	Lot Size (Acres)	Residential Density (Units per Acre)
3201	36	209 GLENRIDGE AVE	4	0.08	52
3201	37	211 GLENRIDGE AVE	1	0.09	11
3201	40	217 GLENRIDGE AVE	1	0.08	12
3212	2	41 GREENWOOD AVE	2	0.18	11
3201	41	219-221 GLENRIDGE AVE	8	0.18	44
3206	16	7 NO. WILLOW ST	5	0.38	13
3201	42	223-229 GLENRIDGE AVE	16	0.19	86
3201	43	465 BLOOMFIELD AVE	2	0.09	22
3208	37	40 GREENWOOD AVE	87	2.15	41
TOTAL WITHIN STUDY AREA			126	3.41	37

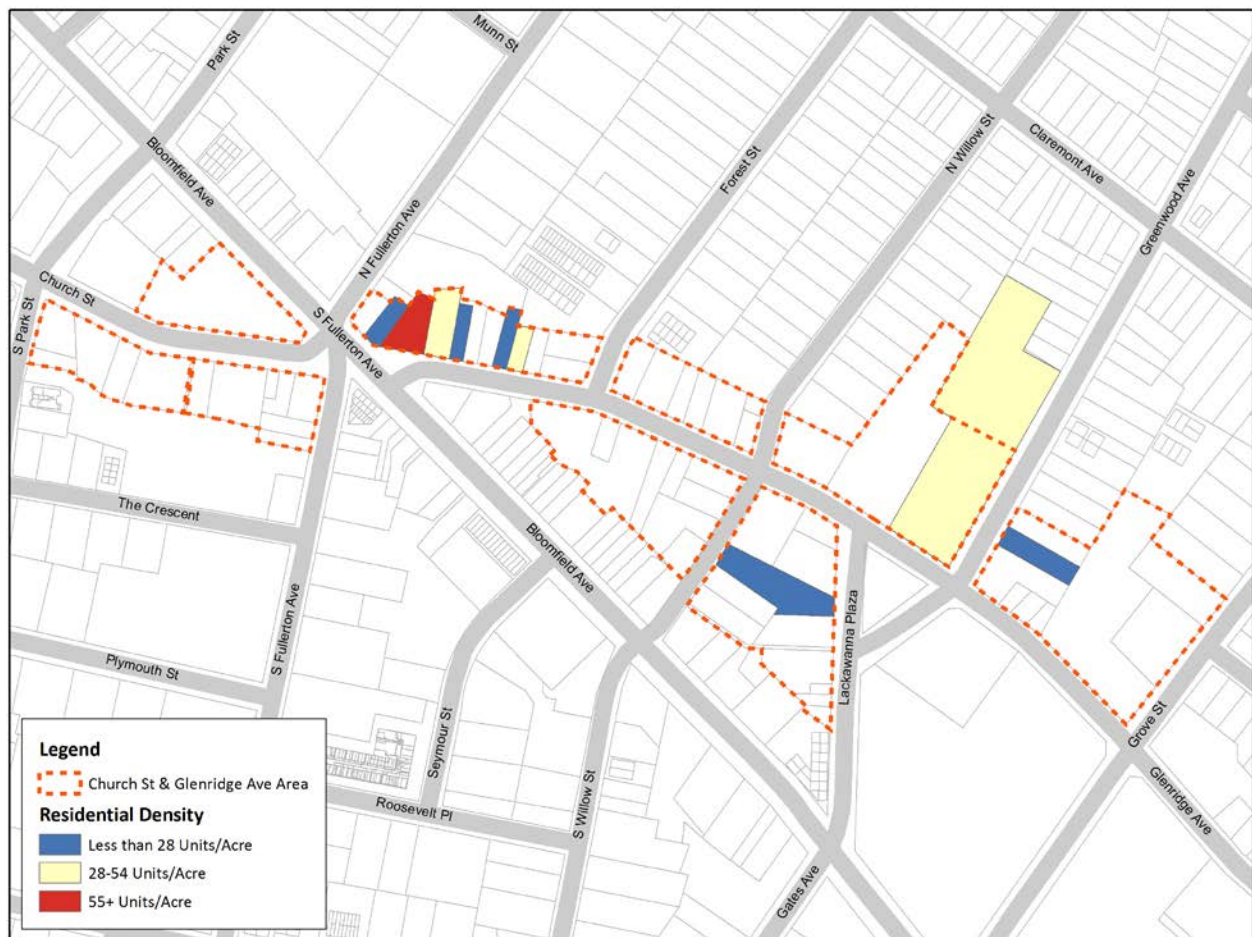


Figure 5: Density in the study area

ADJACENT ZONE DISTRICTS

The study area is bounded by five different zone districts and one redevelopment area, as shown in Figure 6. Along the south side of Church Street, the area is bounded by the Hahne's Redevelopment Area to the south. This redevelopment area is now home to the Crescent Parking Deck to the south of this portion of the study area. On the north side of Church Street, the area is bounded by the C-1 Central Business – Center Area zone district to the west along Bloomfield Avenue and Church Street.

To the south along Glenridge Avenue, the area is bounded by properties with frontage on Bloomfield Avenue, which is also located within the C-1 Central Business – Center Area zone district. To the north along Glenridge Avenue, the study area is bounded by four districts. Three of these districts are residential in nature, ranging in density from two-family uses in the R-2 zone to apartment uses in the R-3 and R-4 zones. Finally, a small portion of the study area is adjacent to the OR-3 zone, which permits office uses in addition to residential.

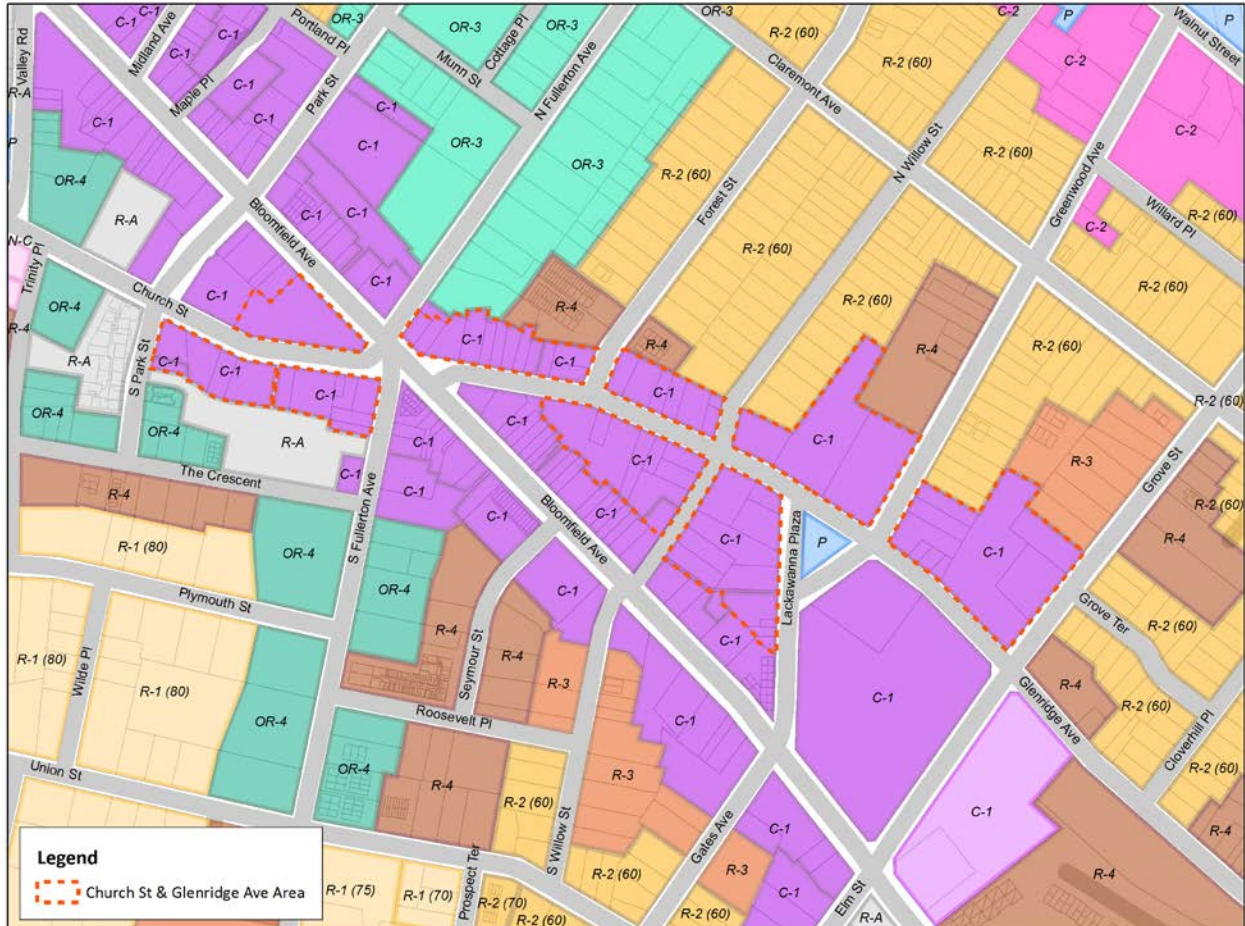


Figure 6 - Zoning map of the study area

EXISTING HISTORIC DISTRICT

Portions of the study area are located within the Town Center Historic District. Properties along Church Street and the north side of Glenridge Avenue just east of the intersection with Bloomfield Avenue are within the district. Also, select properties along the western side of North Willow Street and Lackawanna Plaza are within the district as well. All of these properties, except those along Lackawanna Plaza, in the study area were included in the designation of the Town Center Historic District in 2002 under Montclair Ordinance No. 02-38. The properties along Lackawanna Plaza were added to the Town Center Historic District in 2003 under Montclair Ordinance No. 03-47.

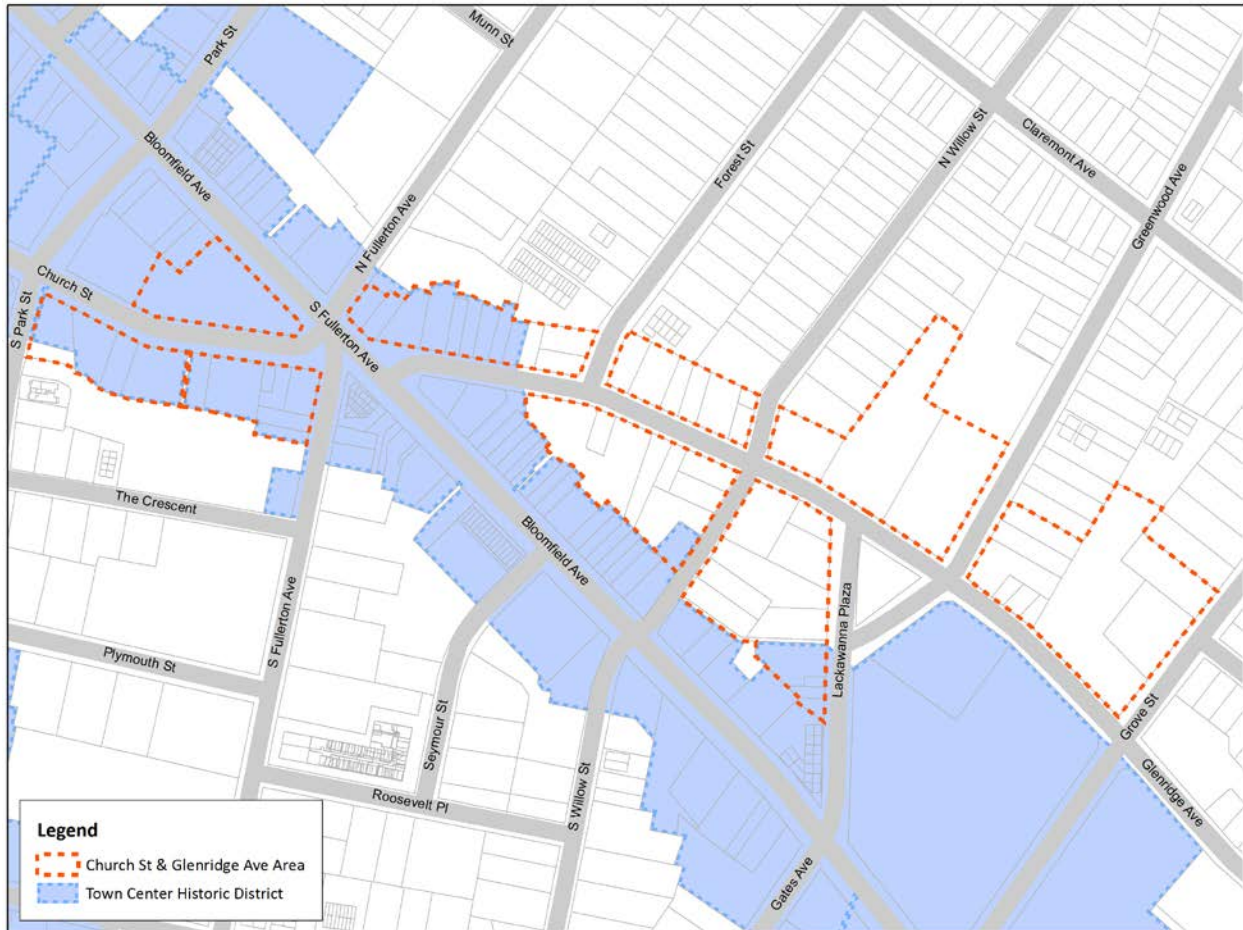


Figure 7 - Historic District boundary in the study area

UNIFIED LAND USE AND CIRCULATION ELEMENT

The study area is located within two of the recommended zones in the 2015 Unified Land Use & Circulation Element of the Township Master Plan. The properties located on Blocks 2206, 2207, 3201, 3205 and 3206 are located in the recommended C-2: Township Center land use district as identified in the Master Plan Element. The properties located on Blocks 3204, 3208 and 3212 are located in the recommended C-3: Urban Edge land use district as identified in the plan.

The C-2 district permits properties up to six stories in height, with the ability to go up to seven stories as part of a zoning incentive program. The C-3 district permits buildings up to four stories in height. The purpose of this Master Plan Amendment is to create a new land use district that reflects the existing scale of development within this area.

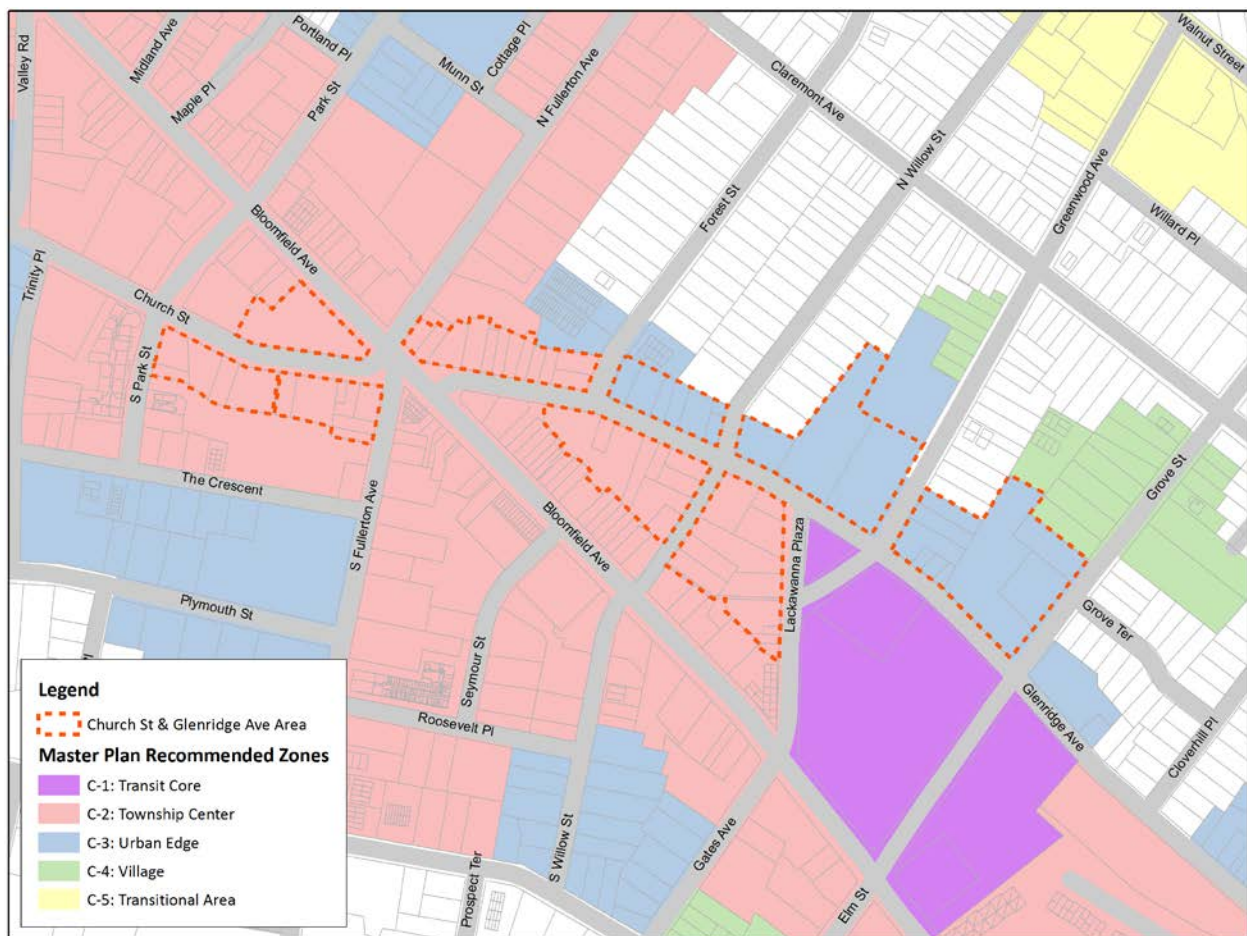


Figure 8 - Master Plan recommended zones and the study area, outlined in black

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

The goal of this master plan amendment is to protect the character and context of the Church Street and Glenridge Avenue corridor. While Bloomfield Avenue serves as the main commercial thoroughfare in Montclair Township, Church Street and Glenridge Avenue are key secondary commercial streets that provide unique eating/drinking, retail and residential opportunities. The lower traffic volume of these streets presents greater street level activity in a highly pedestrian oriented environment.

The following objectives should be achieved by this master plan amendment

- Building height and scale should match the existing height and scale in this neighborhood.
- The pedestrian experience along Church Street and Glenridge Avenue should be protected and enhanced to encourage increased street activity.
- Pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Bloomfield Avenue, North and South Fullerton Avenue, Church Street and Glenridge Avenue should be enhanced to promote connectivity of the area.
- Additional opportunities for enlarged street-level, pedestrian areas should be encouraged through programs like parklets.
- The proliferation of additional residential housing should be encouraged in the area, due to proximity to eating/drinking, retail and transit opportunities, to promote active streetscapes.
- Land uses of the area should continue to promote a broad variety of uses and encourage additional arts and entertainment uses.
- Due to the area's location within the heart of Montclair's commercial center, parking uses should be considered as principal uses, but should be developed with significant consideration to the pedestrian environment of the area by taking steps to provide appropriate screening, limit driveways and mitigate potential negative impacts.
- The expansion of the Town Center Historic District eastward along Glenridge Avenue should be evaluated.

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

C-3C: Historic Center

This Master Plan Amendment recommends create a new land use district, the C-3C Historic Center district. This area includes the historic urban core of the Township known as Old Bloomfield Avenue and maintains the lower scale of commercial development that characterizes this area.

Three properties in the study area would be excluded from this district. Union Gardens, the apartment building at the corner of Greenwood Avenue and Glenridge Avenue, would be changed from C-1 to the adjacent R-4 zone district. The existing 2-family property on the eastern side of Greenwood Avenue just north of Glenridge Avenue and the adjacent vacant lot used for parking would be changed to the adjacent R-2 Residential zone district.

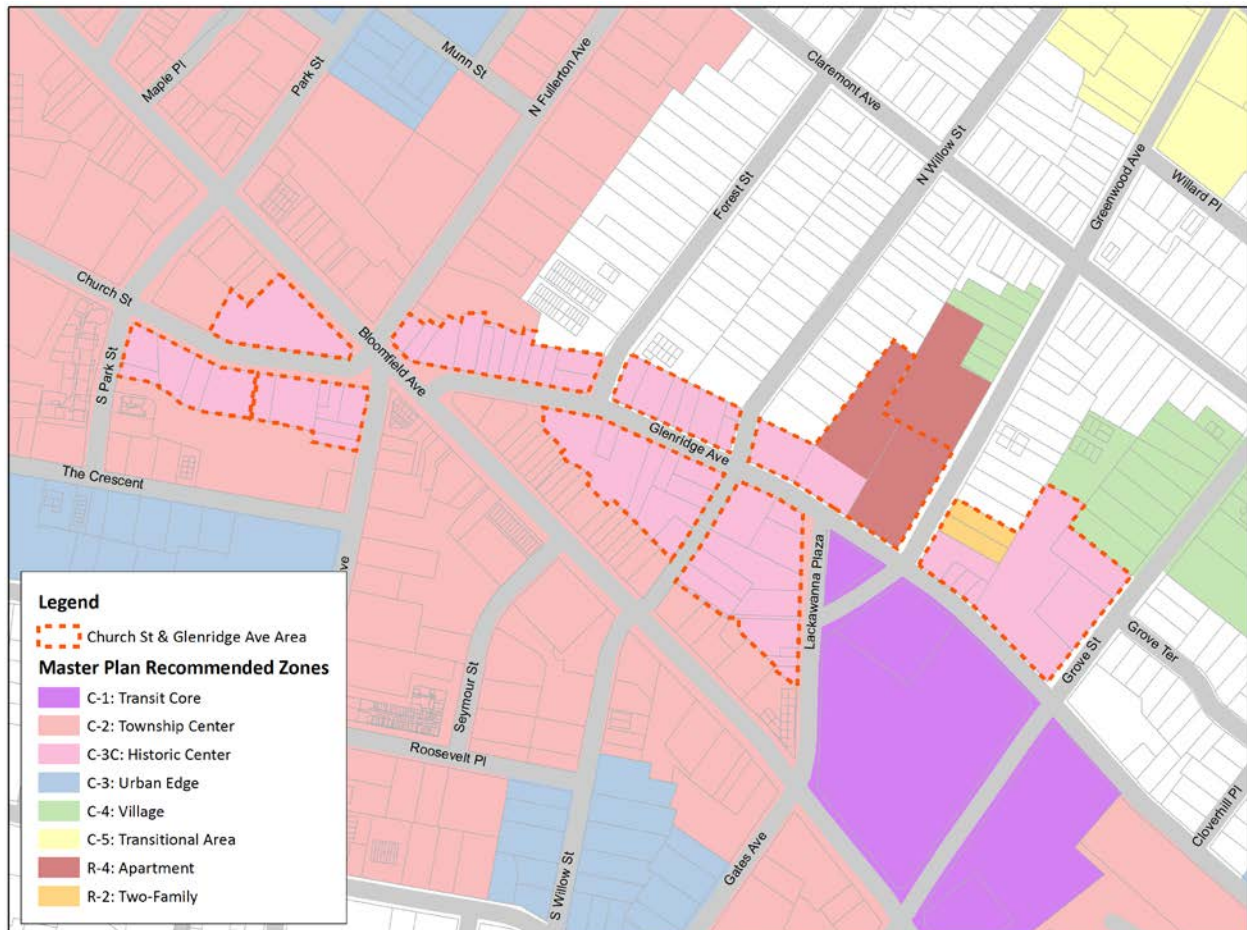


Figure 9 - Proposed Land Use Designation

The C-3C zone district will be moderately high density albeit in context and character with the pedestrian oriented nature of the district. Uses of the zone district should promote active and diverse streetscapes with a variety of uses. Added height and density in this Historic Center area should be in context with the pedestrian oriented nature of Church Street and Glenridge Avenue to promote appropriately scaled, yet highly active streetscapes. This district recognizes the unique nature of this area and these streets to distinguish from the primary commercial corridor of Bloomfield Avenue. Appropriate land uses include regional and local retail, Class A office space, residential elevator flats, regional entertainment venues, mixed-use buildings and structured parking.

Bulk and Building Standards

- The zoning should permit buildings up to 3 stories and 37 feet in height.
- Bulk and building standards should be structured to recognize the significant grade change along Glenridge Avenue and to recognize opportunities to increase density of uses with respect to stories and height. This includes uses at grade which may be located in a basement level or raised first floor level.
- Densities should not exceed 40 residential units per acre.

Uses

- Buildings should be a blend of retail, office and residential uses with a high ratio of ground-floor windows. When possible, the Township should encourage the construction of residential and office development above retail stores.
- Zoning should permit a mix and balance of uses that allow the district to be active during all times of the day and night.
- Existing prohibited and conditional uses, as regulated in existing zoning districts within the borders of this zone, should carry over into the land use regulations for this zone.
- The list of permitted uses should be expanded to include a wider variety of arts and entertainment-related uses such as live/work dwellings, art studios, live entertainment, microbreweries, movie and recording studios.
- Parking lots should be permitted as a principal use and should only be developed with significant consideration to the pedestrian environment of the area by taking steps to screen parking, limit driveways and mitigate all potential negative impacts.

Parking

- New parking should be to the rear of buildings within new parking decks and garages faced with liner buildings of retail and residential.

Expansion of Town Center Historic District

The properties along the north and south side of Glenridge Avenue should be evaluated to determine inclusion in an expansion of the Town Center Historic District. If the evaluation determines properties in this area are eligible for inclusion in the district, such

an expansion should be pursued. An expansion of the Town Center Historic District would create consistency in maintaining the historic character and context along the corridor from Church Street eastward along Glenridge Avenue.

Parklets

Glenridge Avenue has attracted a variety of restaurant uses. Its narrow sidewalks, however, provide limited opportunity for pedestrian amenities and outdoor dining as is found along Church Street. One option to provide additional pedestrian amenities along Glenridge Avenue is to permit storeowners to create parklets in the parking spaces in front of their stores. Parklets are protected seating areas located within an on-street parking space and can include a number of design elements to create an amenity for pedestrians, patrons and customers of local shops and restaurants. They provide an opportunity to create pedestrian amenities at no public cost. Model parklet programs are currently implemented in cities such as San Francisco and Philadelphia, which permit businesses to create and manage parklets. A manual with design standards and an established permitting process should be created to administer such a program in Montclair Township on Glenridge Avenue.



Figure 10: A view of the Blue Fig parklet in San Francisco. Image courtesy of feeneyinc.com.