

**BENECKE ECONOMICS
8410 SANCTUARY BOULEVARD
RIVERDALE, NJ 07457**

February 9, 2021

Township of Verona Planning Board
600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey 07044

Re: Sunset Avenue Redevelopment Area – Planning Area Designation
Verona, NJ
Block 303, Lot 4

Dear Planning Board Members,

Our office has reviewed the following documents regarding the planning area designation of the property at Block 303, Lot 4 in Verona, NJ:

- The 2009 Verona Master Plan
- The 2004 Essex County Cross-Acceptance Report
- The 2001 New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan

Our office has determined that the property at Block 303, Lot 4 is in both PA-5 and PA-1 planning areas. The 2009 Verona Master Plan does not include language regarding the PA-5 area along the eastern border of the Township. In section 14, page 19 of the 2009 Verona Master Plan, it states “The Township of Verona has been designated, in most parts, as a PA-1, metropolitan planning area 1.”

In the 2004 Essex County Cross-Acceptance Report, on page 210 in the “Township of Verona Consistency with the Preliminary Plan” under “Requested changes to the Preliminary Policy Map”, it states, “The First Mountain should not be designated as (an) Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area, as this area has already been developed.”

According to the 2001 New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, under the “Policy Objectives” discussing “Redevelopment” on page 219, it states:

Redevelopment: Encourage environmentally appropriate redevelopment in existing Centers and existing developed areas that have the potential to become Centers or in ways that support Center-based development to accommodate growth that would otherwise occur in the Environs. Redevelop with intensities sufficient to support transit, a range of uses broad enough to encourage activity beyond the traditional workday,

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efficient use of infrastructure, and physical design features that enhance public safety, encourage pedestrian activity and reduce dependency on the automobile to attract growth otherwise planned for the Environs.

Furthermore, the plan states under Implementation Strategy on page 219, “The State Plan acknowledge that growth and economic development will occur in environmentally sensitive areas. Its policies state that growth be guided into well-planned Centers with appropriately scaled public facilities and services.”

Lastly, on page 220 the plan states, “Having agreed on the resources, sites and systems that are critical to preserve, it is up to each community and region to determine exactly how to accommodate growth while preserving those features.”

The subject property is situated in close proximity to the Extended Town Center zone of Verona and is thereby an extension of the Verona town center. The property has historically been occupied by a commercial structure, which later came to be used by the school Spectrum360, which is currently in the process of moving to another location.

In summary, our office recognizes that the subject property is designated PA5 as well as PA1. However, it is our opinion that the intention of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan is to allow for “limited growth” in environmentally sensitive areas, and that the Sunset Avenue Redevelopment Area is an appropriate use of the previously developed, sewer service area (SSA).

Sincerely yours,

Chelsea L. Gleis, P.P.
Benecke Economics

CC: Ashley Neale, Planning Board Secretary
Greg Mascera, Esq., Board Attorney