

ENGLEWOOD MASTER PLAN 2009 Land Use Element

November 24, 2009

ENGLEWOOD LAND USE ELEMENT

Introduction

Beginning in 1995, the City of Englewood undertook the challenge of revitalizing its Central Business District and nearby residential neighborhoods. To meet its goals, the City implemented construction projects, established private-public partnerships, and coordinated programs involving Federal, State, and locally funded projects. These efforts resulted in a vital and attractive Central Business District, a reconstruction of the City's infrastructure, sweeping improvements in some existing neighborhoods, and development of new commercial and residential areas. Through ongoing monitoring and detailed evaluation of land use patterns, Englewood can continue to meet the challenge of identifying ways to renew itself while maintaining the fundamental character of the community.

Successful renewal in Englewood requires a three-pronged approach: neighborhood preservation, redevelopment, and rezoning. This comprehensive approach, with its basis in smart growth principles, will provide a strong foundation on which to rebuild key areas within the City as well as support the recent improvements to our Central Business District.

The progress made in the last fourteen years has provided an unprecedented opportunity for the City of Englewood to build upon its success. If the City is to move forward, it is crucial that the Englewood Community and its partners maintain an open and flexible attitude toward change and maintain high design standards in any new development. The City's ownership of two key properties, Lincoln School and Liberty School, provides a unique planning opportunity to support the Central Business District and the surrounding residential neighborhoods for the future.

In 2002, Englewood's Master Plan explored opportunities for redevelopment that extended outside the Central Business District. In 2009, it is important to re-focus efforts on the Central Business District and the immediately surrounding neighborhoods to both secure and preserve those neighborhoods while continuing to improve the Central Business District. There is an intimate relationship between the neighborhoods to the north and south of Palisade Avenue and the Central Business District. One cannot be maintained without investment in the other. This synergy is important to identify and should help craft neighborhood preservation, zoning and redevelopment



Figure II-1: New Commercial Building on Palisade Avenue Replacing Vacant Storefronts (1999 -2000)

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policy in the area.

Significant opportunities also exist through zoning analysis and modification, particularly in those neighborhoods nearest the downtown. Although ongoing downtown development and neighborhood preservation projects will continue as an integral part of the City's Master Plan, it is essential that the City address the issue of zoning as an extremely significant factor as the renewal effort moves forward.

The City of Englewood can be viewed as a series of neighborhoods, each with its own unique character and community. Yet every neighborhood is also an important part of the City as a whole and has an impact on the surrounding neighborhoods. From this perspective, it has become increasingly evident that a number of current zoning districts have land uses that are incompatible with the existing zoning. In other cases, existing zoning has a negative impact on adjoining neighborhoods. Underutilization of areas is yet a third concern that limits the potential and well-being of the City.

The primary objective of Englewood's Master Plan 2009 is to improve the quality of life of all Englewood residents while maintaining Englewood as a fiscally viable and stable community. Many of



Figure II-2: Concept Drawing James Street

the proposed zoning modifications detailed below are designed to maintain, support and increase property values, stabilize neighborhoods, and provide opportunities for the private sector to invest in Englewood's future. However, modifications in zoning must be made in a manner that will retain the unique character of Englewood, including its diversity, overall scale, and residential nature.



Figure II-3: James Street After Infrastructure Improvements



Figure II-4: Market Rate Housing - James Street Area

Over the last several years, the City of Englewood has evaluated a variety of redevelopment proposals. The City has learned, as a result of these experiences, that all proposed development projects, particularly those that involve extensive changes, must stand on their own merit to insure that the changes brought on by specific developments are consistent with the goals and objectives of the community.



Figure II-5: Armory Street After Neighborhood Preservation Project

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All proposals should be subject to extensive public scrutiny. In addition, all seemingly viable redevelopment proposals should be further evaluated in terms of their impact on the quality of life in Englewood

This Master Plan strives to direct land use change so that the evolution of Englewood is consistent with the goals set forth here. The value of a Master Plan is that it provides a conceptual framework for comprehensive planning and an approach toward change and growth. The Plan provides a philosophy and a context in which to consider the available options and a tool to evaluate the myriad ideas, development proposals, use variance applications, site planning decisions, and land use issues the City will encounter.

Historical Patterns of Land Use and Zoning

In Englewood and throughout the United States, land use patterns have been a product of geography as well as social and economic concerns. During the early part of the nineteenth century land use patterns were largely a product of selective settlement, industrial and commercial development, and entrepreneur-

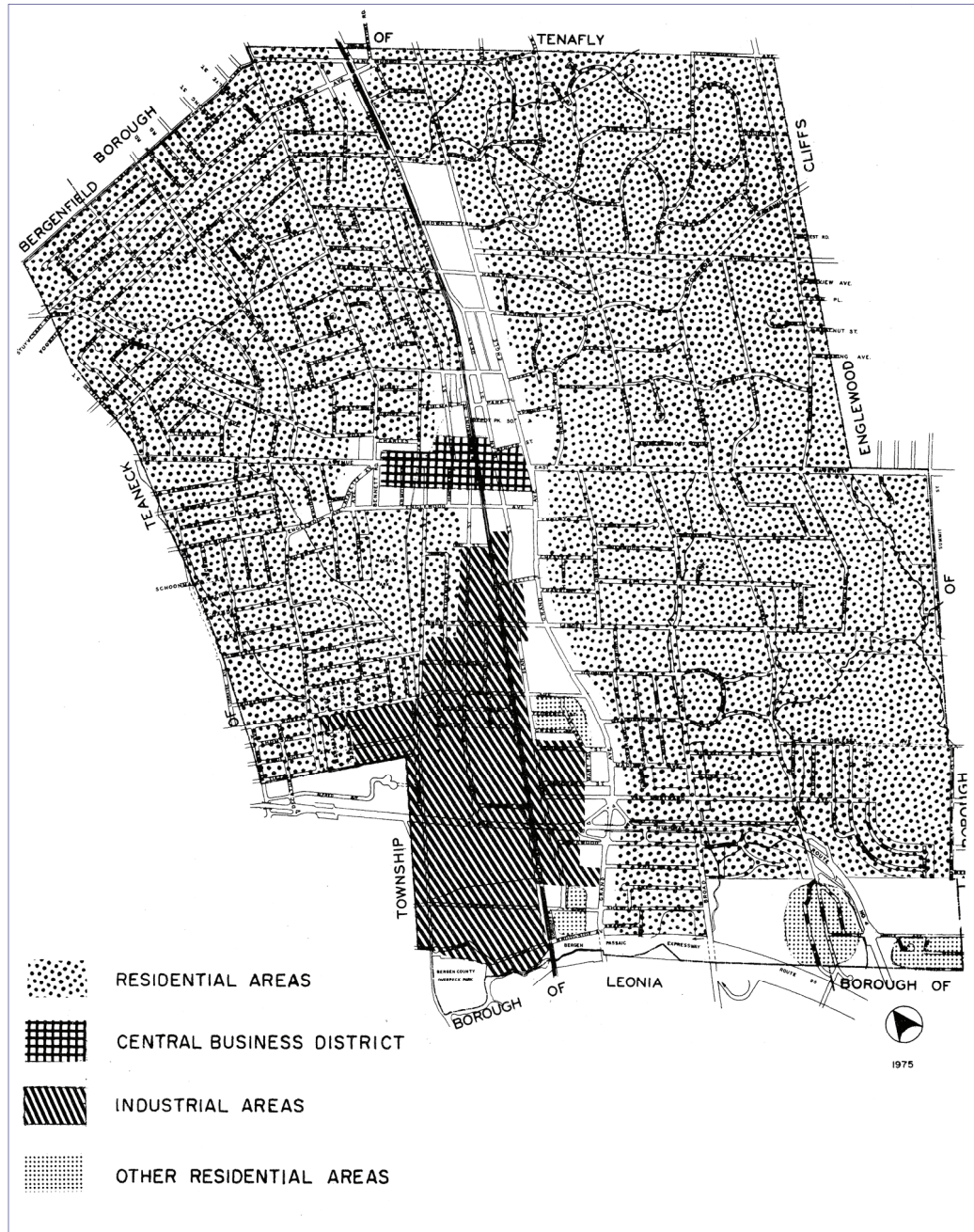


Figure II-6: Englewood Land Use Pattern in 1974

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rial enterprises. Prior to 1926, zoning regulations were subject to continual constitutional challenges. That changed in 1926, when the United States Supreme Court (*Village of Euclid, Ohio v. Ambler Realty Company*) ruled that property rights were not absolute and that zoning ordinances were a constitutional means of protecting the public welfare and safety. As a result of this ruling, the voters of the State of New Jersey approved a zoning amendment to the state constitution. The New Jersey amendment mandated that the legislature empower municipalities to determine the regulation of land use.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, land use patterns began to shift to incorporate the public's growing inter-

est in aesthetic and quality-of-life concerns. Public park development and landscape architecture gained prominence, reflecting the idea that the community as a whole was affected by land use patterns and therefore such patterns were both public and private concerns. Street layouts became subject to the approval of the various municipalities. Zoning became an important tool that enabled municipalities such as Englewood to incorporate the needs of the community in decisions related to growth and development.



Figure II - 8: Central Business District, circa 1960



Figure II - 7: Palisade Avenue looking East—circa 1910

The Evolution of Zoning and Land Use in Englewood

Englewood's zoning is an outgrowth of development patterns that began in the nineteenth century and continued through the urban renewal of the 1970's. The farmlands, estates and residential areas from the prior century largely correspond to our residential zones today. The City's Central Business District reflects its origin in proximity to the railroad. The industrial district, not developed until the mid-twentieth century, is located in an area close to major highways. It occupied a formerly flood-prone marsh area

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that had previously remained largely undeveloped because of the poor physical conditions of the land.

From the 1920's through the 1940's extensive subdivisions were created in the second, third, and fourth wards of the City. During the 1940's through the 1960's, the industrial section in the South of Englewood took shape, and during the 1970's urban redevelopment brought about the construction of low-rise public housing in several areas of the City.

In 1975, the New Jersey State legislature required that every community develop a comprehensive Master Plan to examine its respective land use policies. Responsibility for the Master Plan was conferred upon the Planning Board. From 1975 to the present, the Planning Board was required to re-examine and update its Master Plan every six years.

During the 1970's Englewood was already engaged in planning efforts involving public housing, the Central Business District, and industrial development. Englewood's commitment to low and moderate income housing during the 1970's was exceptional in suburban New Jersey communities. The diverse population, coupled with a progressive commu-

nity leadership, resulted in large-scale slum clearance and the construction of low-rise affordable housing on an unprecedented scale in Bergen County. Between 1970 and 1980, numerous housing developments were constructed to replace aging and dilapidated units. These included subsidized public housing projects constructed by the Englewood Housing Authority and other non-profit groups and these projects substantially increased the available housing stock in the 1970's. In addition, the Englewood Housing Authority created the West Street Senior Citizen's Housing, a mid-rise apartment complex, to accommodate senior citizen housing in Englewood. The locations and numbers of these housing units are documented in the Housing Element that is part of this plan and all of the major housing projects of the 70's and 80's continue to provide affordable housing throughout Englewood.



***Figure II - 9: Constructed in the 1970's,
King Gardens Housing Development***

It is ironic that thirty years later, Englewood, in order to comply with State Law, had to prove its commitment to affordable housing to the Council On Affordable Housing, while surrounding communities, unresponsive to the need for low and moderate income housing and completely devoid of diversity, received certification without any substantive changes to their zoning or housing stock. For those communities, zoning was used to enforce policies of exclusion. Engle-



***Figure II - 10: Rock Creek Housing
(constructed in the 1970's)***

wood's zoning allows for a vast array of possibilities for multi-family and small and large residential development. The 2009 Master Plan contains a Housing Element documenting Englewood's commitment to affordable housing.

Existing Land Use Analysis

The land use element, one of two required sections of a master plan in New Jersey, forms the core element of the plan, showing existing land use patterns as well as presenting a coherent plan for the future use of land. The generation of this land use element occurs simultaneously with the development of a Geographic Information System (GIS) for Englewood, and the GIS is utilized as a planning tool in this section. A Geographic Information System combines mapping with information storage and analysis. A number of the maps found in this plan have been generated utilizing our new GIS system, and it is anticipated that future planning efforts will have the benefit of a more comprehensive GIS system. A number of underlying principles serve as the foundation for the Planning Board's examination of existing land uses and the recommendations for the future. These principals are stated as follows:

- In a fully developed older community such as Englewood, zoning regulations must be reviewed periodically to determine the continued relevance to today's land use patterns.
- Englewood's current zoning in some instances does not correspond to the ac-

tual or preferred land use pattern that supports the planning objectives.

- Zoning values of prior decades are subject to review and revision based on new experiences.
- Indicators of the need to revise zon-

ing regulations may be any of the following:

- the existence of current incompatible land uses that jeopardize fragile residential neighborhoods



*Figure II - 11: Aerial View of Englewood
(A component of Englewood's GIS System)*

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- adverse impact on property values within a zoning district related to current zoning
- adverse impact on property values of adjacent zoning districts
- depressed property utilization within zoning districts
- lack of correspondence between the zoning regulations and the actual land use patterns
- artificial depression of the private market, resulting from outdated zoning regulations (If updated, zoning regulations can be used in support of revitalization and reinvestment).

A further indicator of zoning regulations in need of review is the approval of use variances in increasing numbers in a particular area.

Englewood encompasses 3,167 acres or 4.95 square miles. Some of the defining characteristics of the location of the City are its proximity to the Hudson River, the George Washington Bridge and New York City. New York City is less than 4 miles from the Englewood limits and can be reached in a matter of minutes from downtown Englewood. Englewood is traversed by two highways: Interstate Highway I 80/95, a major East-West thoroughfare, and State Highway No. 4, also an East-West corridor for Bergen County.

Residential areas have been and continue to be the central focus of the Master Plan, and the support for residential zones remains the primary concern of the Zone Plan. Englewood's Master Plan also recognizes the need for renewal and redevelopment. Renewal efforts form the basis of many of the proposed zoning modifications contained in this plan.

The existing pattern of land use is depicted on the Land Use Map generated in 2009, showing all uses within the City of Englewood. Nine different uses are designated:

- Recreational Space
- Institutional
- Vacant
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Residential: One Family
- Residential: Multi-Family
- Residential: Condominiums and Apartments
- Mixed-Use Commercial/Residential

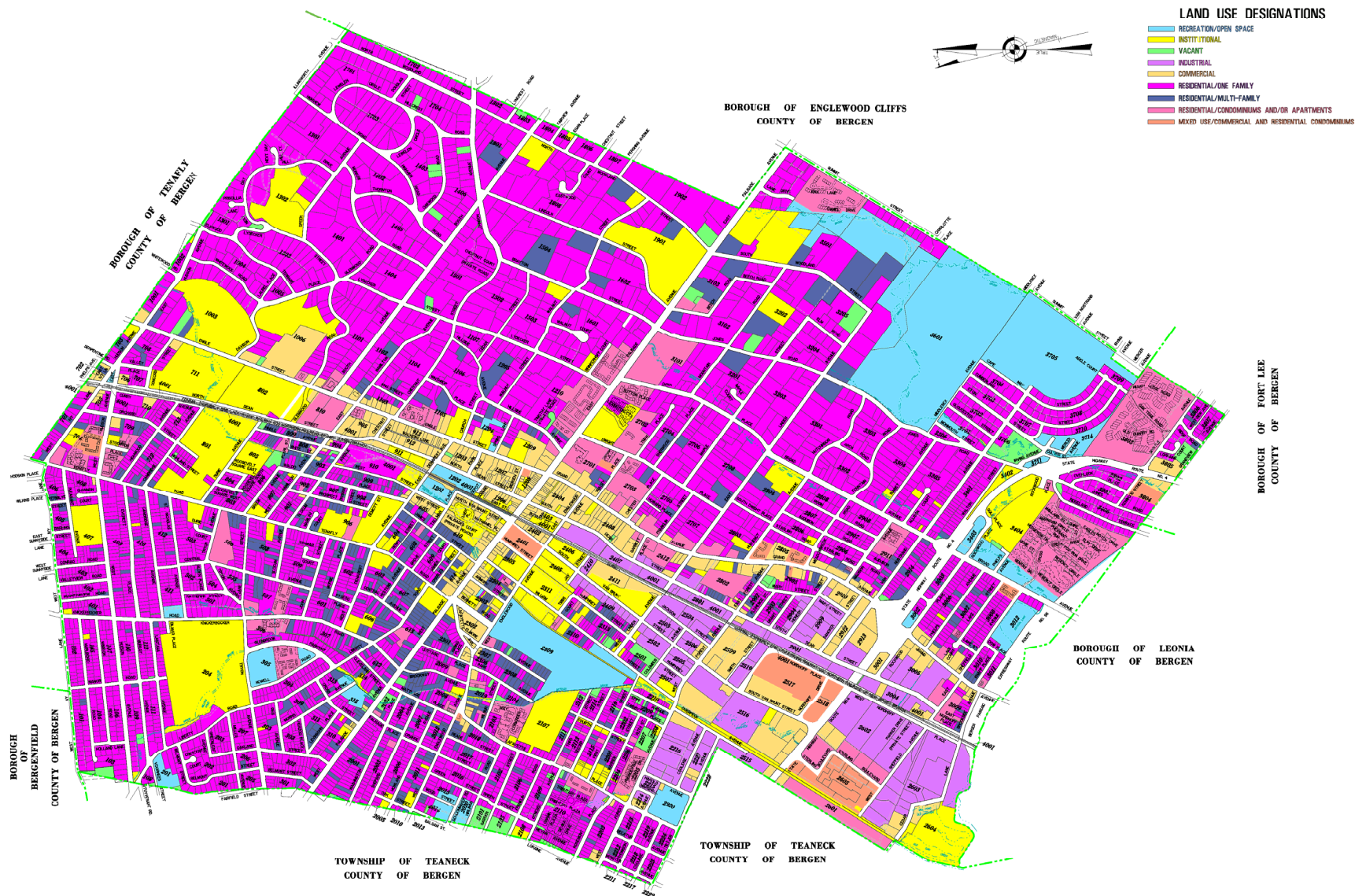
The Land Use Map, illustrated in small scale here and in larger format as an attachment to the Master Plan, shows the existing pattern of development. Residential use, the dominant use in Englewood, exists throughout the City with Industrial Use confined to the south end of the town, and commercial use centered

along Palisade Avenue between Grand Avenue/Engle Street and Tenaflly Road. Commercial uses are also found along the entire length of Grand Street and Engle Street. Apartments and Condominiums are found largely along Grand Avenue, Palisade Avenue, in the southeast corner of Englewood, and distributed throughout the Third and Fourth Wards. Since 2002, a number of mixed-use developments have been constructed in the south of Englewood and along Palisade Avenue. These developments have all been planned by the City and used overlay zoning and municipal project designation as the mechanism to achieve the desired outcome. These projects took years to plan and implement.

Uses related to the real property tax base of Englewood are listed in the tables below. The tables exclude tax exempt properties and public utilities. Property values for 1974 (the date of the first Englewood Master Plan), 1988, 1994, 2002 and 2008 are calculated in the tables. The City is financially dependent on residential property taxes, with almost 75% of its annual revenues coming directly from taxes derived from residential properties. The percentage of tax revenues derived from single family residential properties over the past quarter century increased each year until 2008. Until now, residential taxes increased as a percentage of total tax revenues in

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Figure II-12: 2009 Land Use Map: This map identifies existing land use by individual block and lots. Note that the predominant use is depicted in the dark pink and is residential use.



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comparison to other use classifications, such as commercial and industrial property.

In 1974, residential property accounted for approximately 61% of the total property tax revenues. In 2002, this percentage increased to almost 75%. During this same period, industrial properties, contributing 13.6% in 1974, have reduced their relative tax load to 6.6% of the total revenues derived from property taxes. The shifting burden of property taxes more and more onto residential property owners reflected the relative value of properties in Englewood and the under-utilization of industrial properties.

During the past thirty-five years, the tax base has shifted toward increased total residential valuations and decreased total industrial valuations. The relative valuation of residential properties has increased by 20% during this period, while the relative valuation of industrial properties has decreased by over 50%. This trend started to be changed in 2008 through planning and zoning modifications implemented from 2000 to the present. In 2008, two trends are beginning to be noticeable. First, the percentage of total taxes derived from single family housing started to decline for the first time in thirty five years from 74.91% to 73.23%. At the same time, industrial and

| <i>Real Property</i> | <i>1974</i> | <i>Percent of</i> | <i>Number of</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>Classification</i> | <i>Assessment</i> | <i>Total Ratable</i> | <i>Parcels</i> |
| <i>Value</i> | | | |
| Vacant Land | 3,636,500 | 1.56 | 268 |
| Residential | 143,833,900 | 61.64 | 4,896 |
| Commercial | 33,453,000 | 14.34 | 374 |
| Industrial | 32,563,900 | 13.96 | 148 |
| Apartments | 19,857,500 | 8.51 | 66 |
| Total Ratables | 233,344,800 | 100.00 | 5,752 |

Figure II-13: Real Property Tax Base—1974

| <i>Real Property</i> | <i>1988</i> | <i>Percent of</i> | <i>Number of</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>Classification</i> | <i>Assessment</i> | <i>Total Ratable</i> | <i>Parcels</i> |
| <i>Value</i> | | | |
| Vacant Land | 6,831,600 | 1.14 | 268 |
| Residential | 419,987,800 | 70.24 | 6,019 |
| Commercial | 84,990,200 | 14.21 | 457 |
| Industrial | 65,761,100 | 11.00 | 140 |
| Apartments | 20,351,300 | 3.40 | 59 |
| Total Ratables | 597,922,000 | 100.00 | 6,943 |

Figure II-14: Real Property Tax Base—1988

| <i>Real Property</i> | <i>1994</i> | <i>Percent of</i> | <i>Number of</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>Classification</i> | <i>Assessment</i> | <i>Total Ratable</i> | <i>Parcels</i> |
| <i>Value</i> | | | |
| Vacant Land | 7,335,200 | 0.38 | 89 |
| Residential | 1,438,772,300 | 74.26 | 6,506 |
| Commercial | 282,721,200 | 14.59 | 468 |
| Industrial | 146,179,900 | 7.55 | 135 |
| Apartments | 62,376,600 | 3.22 | 56 |
| Total Ratables | 1,937,385,200 | 100.00 | 7,254 |

Figure II-15: Real Property Tax Base—1994

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apartments accounted for an increase in the percentage of total taxes of approximately 1% each. The industrial increase appears to be related to the proper valuation of land while the apartment increase is due to the newly constructed projects in the downtown together with the "Brownstone Project" north of Route 4. While the numbers do not appear significant, this trend can be expected to increase in the next several years because of the developments under construction.

If the new large developments in the south of Englewood prove successful, then both commercial and apartment categories will increase and the percentage of taxes derived from single family residential properties will decrease. Such a trend would constitute both sound planning by providing a variety of uses in Englewood and also good fiscal planning by reducing the tax burden from single family residential uses.

Several other trends can be discerned from the information in the tables provided. Vacant land, available in the 1970's and 1980's, is virtually nonexistent today. Almost all of the vacant land that was suitable for construction that existed in 1974 has been built upon. It should also be noted that the increase in resi-

dential units over the past twenty years is for the most part a function of condominium construction and conversion and not the creation of new single-family subdivisions. Substantial condominium development occurred from the 1970's through the 1990's at Summit Woods (at Summit Street), Oak Trail Road (at Myrtle

Avenue), Tributary Gardens (at Genesee Avenue), Sutton Place (at Dana Place), Forest Gardens (at Forest Avenue), Cross Creek (at Broad Avenue), and Corriander Way (at Lafayette Place).

| <i>Real Property</i> | <i>2002</i> | <i>Percent of</i> | <i>Number of</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>Classification</i> | <i>Assessment</i> | <i>Total Ratable</i> | <i>Parcels</i> |
| <i>Value</i> | | | |
| Vacant Land | 8,576,300 | 0.43 | 105 |
| Residential | 1,508,011,700 | 74.91 | 6,456 |
| Commercial | 306,579,500 | 15.23 | 534 |
| Industrial | 134,174,000 | 6.67 | 134 |
| Apartments | 55,667,500 | 2.77 | 55 |
| Total Ratables | 2,013,009,000 | 100.00 | 7,284 |

Figure II-16: Real Property Tax Base—2002

| <i>Real Property</i> | <i>2008</i> | <i>Percent of</i> | <i>Number of</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>Classification</i> | <i>Assessment</i> | <i>Total Ratable</i> | <i>Parcels</i> |
| <i>Value</i> | | | |
| Vacant Land | 27,421,700 | 0.53 | 118 |
| Residential | 3,817,259,000 | 73.23 | 6,708 |
| Commercial | 768,746,400 | 14.75 | 522 |
| Industrial | 400,016,900 | 7.67 | 129 |
| Apartments | 199,256,600 | 3.82 | 55 |
| Total Ratables | 5,212,700,600 | 100.00 | 7,532 |

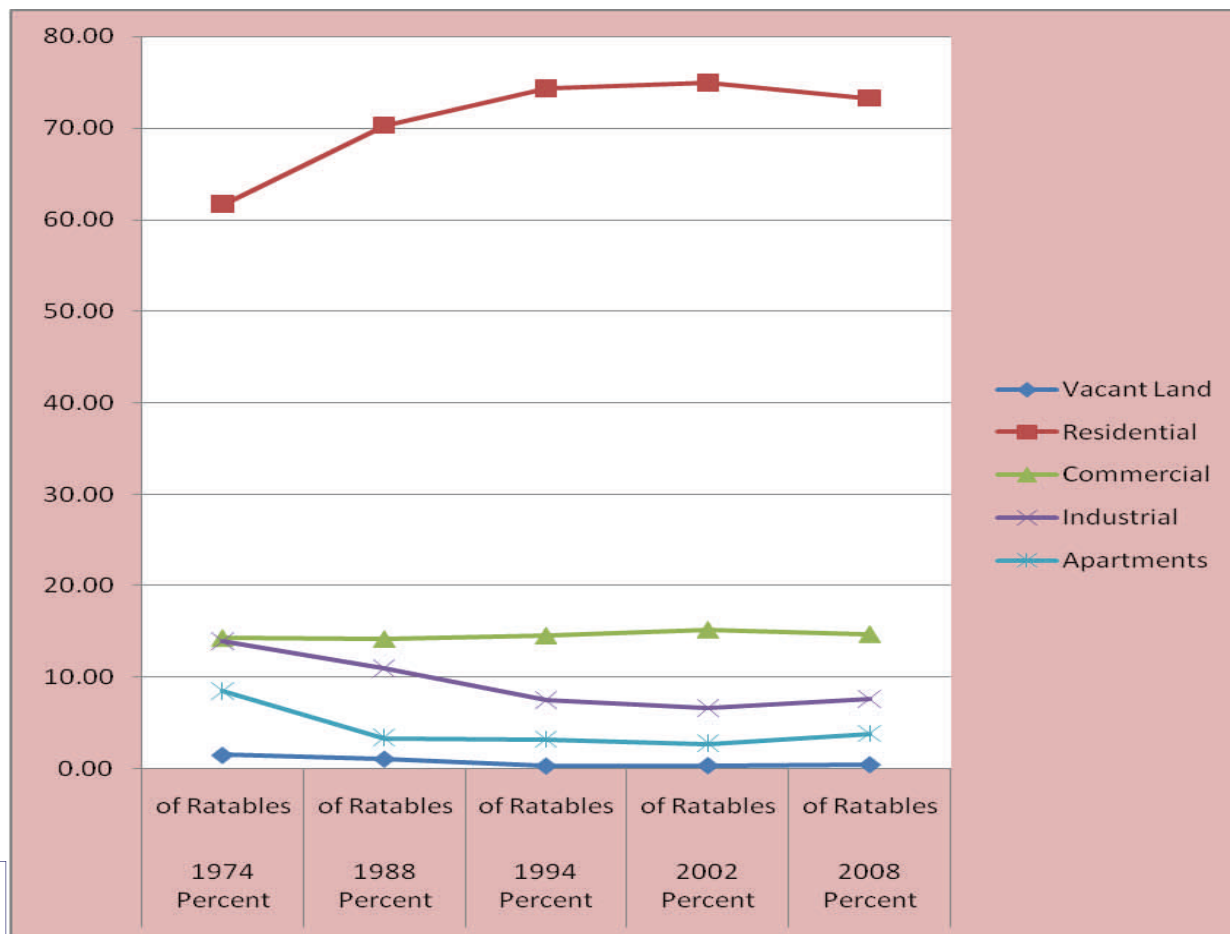
Figure II-17: Real Property Tax Base—2002

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Several recommendations of this plan are:

- To utilize zoning to maximize the value of all property within Englewood and to attempt to re-distribute some of the existing tax burden away from single family homes.
- To continue to support the Central Business District through zoning initiatives, parking and traffic improvements, way-finding systems and other programs that produce substantial benefits to the downtown.
- To examine zoning in areas where non conforming uses are intruding into areas.

Figure II-18: Graph of Trends 1974-2002 in Ratables (note different scales for Residential Properties and all other categories)



| Real Property Classification | 1974 Percent of Ratables | 1988 Percent of Ratables | 1994 Percent of Ratables | 2002 Percent of Ratables | 2008 Percent of Ratables |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Vacant Land | 1.56 | 1.14 | 0.38 | 0.43 | 0.53 |
| Residential | 61.64 | 70.24 | 74.26 | 74.91 | 73.23 |
| Commercial | 14.34 | 14.21 | 14.59 | 15.23 | 14.75 |
| Industrial | 13.96 | 11.00 | 7.55 | 6.67 | 7.67 |
| Apartments | 8.51 | 3.40 | 3.22 | 2.77 | 3.82 |

Figure II-19: Tabulation of Trends 1974-2002 in Ratables

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- To remove blight in residential areas and through this blight mitigation, maintain property values in neighborhoods
- To continue to invest in infrastructure improvements in fragile neighborhoods and to strengthen zoning that addresses appropriate and necessary buffer areas where residential neighborhoods are threatened by commercial and industrial development.
- To continue to re-examine industrial areas with an eye to permitting uses that will transform these low value zones into higher value uses that eventually will lead to redevelopment and renewal.
- To attract commercial uses in the OI, LI and SBD zones to provide additional ratable while maintaining a quality of life for all residents in Englewood.

Figure II-20: Current zoning districts in the City of Englewood (a large scale zoning map is available at the Office of the City Clerk)

Each existing zoning district is discussed in detail here and proposed zoning modifications and revisions are presented in the form of recommendations.

