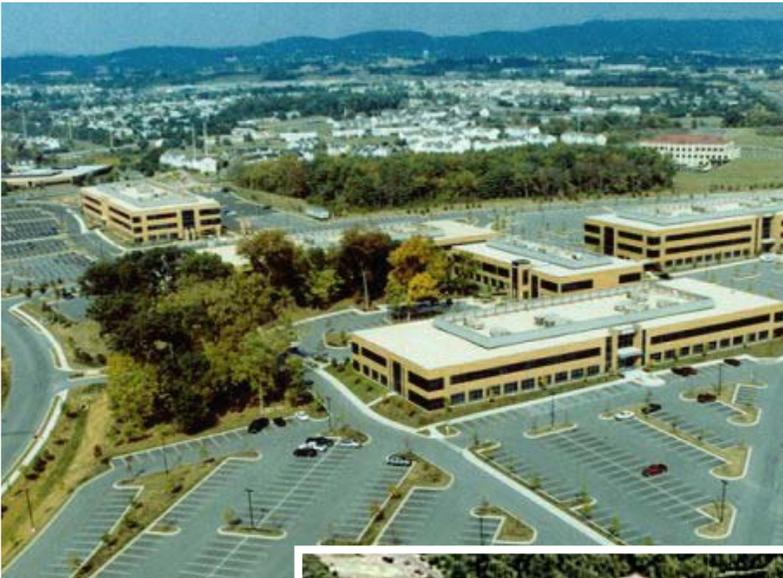


Office Park Housing

Adapting Underutilized Office Parks for Housing



OFFICE PARK HOUSING

Adapting Underutilized Office Parks for Housing

March 2008

**Westchester County Department of Planning
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MAPS

Area Map

Site A

Site B

Site C

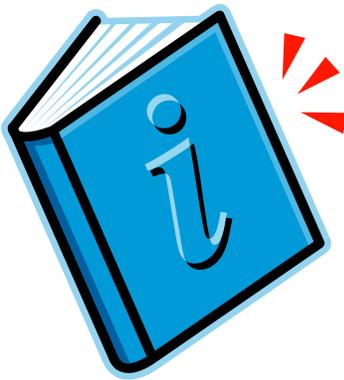
Site D

Site E

Sites B-E

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1. INTRODUCTION



The “Affordable Housing Action Plan” prepared by the Westchester County Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) with the assistance of the County Department of Planning offered guidance to achieve the affordable housing identified as needed in the “Affordable Housing Need Assessment” prepared for Westchester County by the Center for Urban Policy Research of Rutgers University. The Action Plan recommended the continuation of successful on-going programs and the development of new initiatives including approaches to deal with the difficulty of finding suitable sites for affordable housing. Major obstacles to finding sites include: the cost of land in Westchester County; the need for land zoned for a density that would make affordable housing feasible; the requirement for utilities (water and sewer); and the requirement that the roadways be able to handle additional traffic.

The Action Plan proposed “(a) study demonstrating the feasibility of developing affordable housing on unused office park land...for use as a model development plan”. Existing office parks were chosen because they have several advantages: 1) they are already zoned for a high development density; 2) they have good infrastructure including road access and connections to needed utilities; and 3) they have extensive parking areas that are unused during most hours of every day, especially on weekends, and thus could be shared with housing units. Also, since the land has already been developed and parking is available, there are no land acquisition costs or costs for constructing parking. The benefits of building housing in office parks are: the resulting 24-hour activity and security; the ability of some people to walk to work saving energy and reducing traffic; and additional property taxes to the various taxing jurisdictions. The addition of housing within an existing office park may also coincide or generate plans by the owner to upgrade the office



complex to position it better in the market including “green building” elements, landscaping, sitting areas, pedestrian paths, etc. Obviously, since private companies own the office parks and municipalities control zoning, they must both be convinced of the desirability and feasibility of using office park land for the development of affordable housing.

Many mixed use projects that include residential, office and commercial uses are being developed across the country. However, most are either being designed from scratch on vacant land or as a major redevelopment of an existing site. This study illustrates the feasibility of developing affordable housing in existing office parks and proposes model zoning district standards that would enable local municipalities to implement such development. It provides case studies for retro-fitting housing into office park sites that are already developed, some even to the maximum permitted under existing zoning. These examples differ from designing a mixed use development from scratch on a vacant site or proposals for large single-user office campuses. The sites analyzed are similar to many other office parks in Westchester County which also may be suitable for the development of affordable housing.

2. RELATIONSHIP TO WESTCHESTER COUNTY PLANNING POLICY

Most of the office parks that could provide land for the development of affordable and market housing are located on the county’s corridors.

Patterns for Westchester: The Land and the People, the County Planning Board’s long range land



use policy document “offers a broad policy framework for governmental action to guide the County’s future physical development.” It states that “Land available for development along the County’s corridors has been an avenue of opportunity for Westchester’s economy but resulting office campuses and strip developments have also had some less welcome impacts. In the absence of rigorous planning, this type of scattered development can weaken centers, mar the landscape, strain infrastructure and create conflicts between local and through traffic – the classic signs of

urban sprawl...Development along corridors should be consistent with County policy on transportation, housing, waste disposal and watershed protection. Existing corridor development can be enhanced and new corridor development can be designed to encompass mixed uses that improve their function and their economic vitality and make maximum use of the public investment in infrastructure. Forward-looking land use regulations can incorporate site design elements which ease traffic problems, enhance transit opportunities, promote pedestrian activity and deflect adverse impacts on adjacent areas.”

The goal of this study is to promote a proposed strategy contained in Patterns to provide opportunities for affordable housing by encouraging “mixed use development (...residential components of office parks).”



The new affordable housing and market housing within existing office parks on the County’s corridors would enhance the existing development by creating new mixed use nodes. These nodes could function as micro-centers with housing, retail and office uses designed in such a manner as to create a sense of place that functions to the advantage of both the specific sites and the larger community. Any retail use should be for the convenience of the residents and office workers and not compete with downtown businesses. Site planning, architecture, and landscaping should all be coordinated so new housing development provides both an appropriate residential setting and fits into the overall design of the site and the surrounding area.

3. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing is defined as housing for households earning less than 80% of the County median income (adjusted by family size) and requiring no more than 30% of family income for housing costs.

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As indicated earlier, the impetus to develop housing in office parks was to find suitable sites for affordable housing. In order to build housing developments that are 100% affordable, it is necessary to obtain extensive government subsidies. These subsidies are limited in scope and availability. Even with no land cost the economics of development may require additional subsidies to make the housing affordable. Construction costs, financing costs, operating and maintenance costs are very similar for market rate and affordable housing.

One method of developing affordable housing that is being utilized in Westchester County is inclusionary zoning. Under such zoning, a portion of the housing to be developed -- from 6% to 20% -- is required to be affordable, while balance of the units are market rate. This method adopted by many municipalities requires little or no government subsidy, since in the Westchester County housing market, the market rate units can adequately subsidize the affordable units. Examples of apartment buildings containing a required set aside of affordable units include: Bank Street Commons, White Plains; City Center, White Plains; and Avalon Green II, Greenburgh. Since the development of housing in existing office parks further reduces the overall costs (land, parking and utilities), any set aside of affordable units would require even less of a subsidy from the market rate units. While the percent of inclusionary affordable units will be a local decision, based on the research for this report, a requirement of 15% affordability is recommended. Of course if federal, state or county subsidies are included, the percentage of affordable units should be increased.

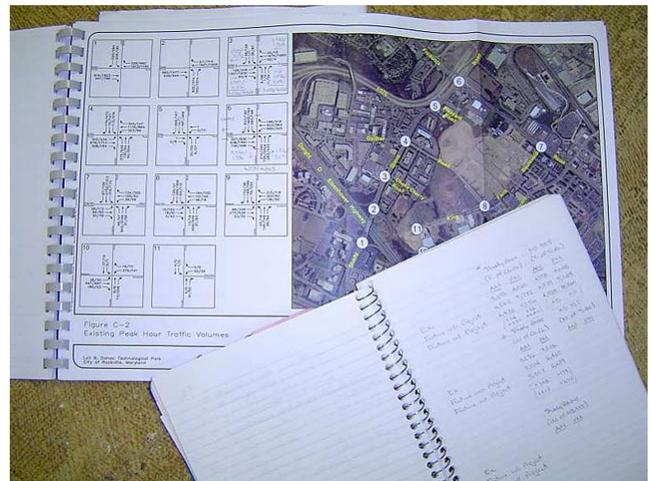


4. INITIAL RESEARCH

Various documents were examined in order to select the most appropriate existing office parks to study as models. The County Report, “Office and Industrial Buildings, 2002” includes an inventory of office buildings of at least 10,000 square feet. The inventory includes building size and year built. A web site, Mr.OfficeSpace.com includes a listing of vacant space in many office buildings in the County. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) Report, “Shared Parking” provides a detailed methodology for the analysis of the utilization of parking areas that are to be shared by more than one use without conflict or encroachment. Various Westchester municipal zoning ordinances were also reviewed.

Based on this information, the goal was to select existing office parks to be analyzed that are typical as to their suitability for the development of affordable housing. Several general criteria were set for the selection of the office parks to be studied.

- First, the office parks should be at least one-half mile from the nearest railroad station. Because people living within walking distance of a train station would typically leave their car parked at their residence while taking a train to work; their doing so would impact the parking needed during daytime work hours. Therefore, it is anticipated that residential buildings within walking distance of a railroad station will have more daytime utilization of parking spaces than residential buildings not within walking distance. While some residents of the new apartment buildings in the office parks may walk to work, most of the residents are likely to drive to work.



- Second, the office parks selected should be located on major roads and have sufficient utility capacity (stormwater, etc.) to absorb additional development without impacting traffic or utilities beyond their capacity.

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- Third, the office parks should have sufficient routinely vacant parking spaces during business hours for use as shared parking for the development of housing.

- Fourth, until the concept is shown to work with little impact, the office parks should preferably be located away from existing low density residential areas and within reasonable distances to existing services.

- Finally, the target population to whom these units would be marketed would be young professionals. The affordable units would be particularly appropriate for entry-level positions. Since the proposed housing would be rental units in mid to high-rise buildings, it is unlikely that families with children would find the units suitable. Therefore the impact on local school districts should be minimal. Office Park Housing could potentially be attractive to seniors. It is also possible that some of the larger companies in the office parks might lease units as extended stay residences for use by employees from out of town who are in Westchester for training or short-term projects.



Initial research was conducted on office parks in two areas: Route 119 in Tarrytown and Greenburgh; and Westchester Avenue in Harrison which are major roads and reasonably distant from low density residential neighborhoods. Site visits were made and zoning ordinances, mapping, aerial photography, the current development plan, and ownership information were reviewed. It was determined that the office parks along Route 119 should be studied further. Representatives of several office parks on the south side of Route 119 between Meadow Street

and the Interstate 287 overpass near Elmsford then were contacted to determine if there was any interest in developing affordable housing on the existing office park sites. The affirmative response led to a more detailed analysis of five sites (A-E) in this corridor, which have excellent road access and adequate utility capacity and are reasonably distant from low density residential areas but not isolated from services. The following are studies of the specific sites selected, but the concept is applicable to other sites in Westchester.

5. SITES STUDIED

Site A is the Talleyrand Office Park (200-220 White Plains Road, Tarrytown) which contains 178,000 square feet of office space in two six-story buildings and the TGIF restaurant. In addition, the overall property includes the 300 unit Talleyrand Crescent Apartment Complex (which includes 20% affordable units). The site is zoned MU Mixed Use.



Site B is the Tarrytown Corporate Center (520-580 White Plains Road, Greenburgh) which contains 471,000 square feet of office space in three six-story buildings and 255,000 square feet of office and laboratory space. In addition to the parking lots on the property, there is a satellite parking lot on Site C for the office building at 540 White Plains Road. The site is zoned OB Office Building

Site C contains a six-story, 150-room hotel (600 White Plains Road, Greenburgh), and a proposal for 75,000 square feet of retail space. The overall parking plan includes reconfiguring the satellite parking lot on the property for Site B, and a satellite parking lot on Site E to serve Site C. The site is zoned OB Office Building.

Site D is the Tarrytown Corporate Center (660 White Plains Road, Greenburgh) which contains 265,000 square feet of office space in one six-story building. The site is zoned OB Office Building



Site E contains the Marriott Hotel (670 White Plains Road, Greenburgh) as well as a satellite parking lot for Site C and an overflow parking lot for the hotel. The site is zoned OB Office Building.

6. SITE CONDITIONS

Site visits were made to all five sites. A count was made of the number of vacant parking spaces on two Thursday afternoons in mid-December (dates included in the ULI study monthly adjustment). The amount of vacant office space was determined for each office building. The proposed development on Site C was reviewed. The Marriott Hotel was contacted regarding the utilization of the overflow parking lot.



Site A

Vacant Office Space	33,150 square feet (18.6%)
Vacant Parking Spaces	156 (1.08 parking spaces/1,000 SF occupied office space)

Site B

Vacant Office Space	69,215 square feet (14.7%)
Vacant CIBA Space	13,000 square feet (5% estimated)
Vacant Parking Spaces (including satellite lot)	537 (0.83 parking spaces/1,000 SF occupied office space)

Site C

(Under Construction)

Site D

Vacant Office Space	49,311 square feet (18.6%)
Vacant Parking Spaces	281 (1.30 parking spaces/1,000 SF occupied office space)

Site E

Vacant Parking Spaces - Overflow Parking Lot	220
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7. SHARED PARKING

The ULI Report includes average monthly adjustment factors and time of day factors for parking utilization. It projects that weekday office parking lot utilization from 9 AM to 4 PM is from 90% to 100%. In addition to counting the currently vacant parking spaces on the sites, in order to estimate the shared parking requirements for offices and housing at the various sites, it is necessary to estimate the amount of parking the new housing would require during business hours.



Site visits were made to two nearby apartment complexes to determine the number of parking spaces utilized by the residents during business hours. Avalon Green I (Taxter Road, Greenburgh) is a 105 unit rental apartment complex. On a Wednesday afternoon in mid-December there were 54 cars parked in the parking areas or 0.51 cars per dwelling unit. The

Talleyrand Crescent Apartments Complex (300 units) parking situation is harder to analyze since there are enclosed garages (with tandem spaces) as well as outside parking areas. However,

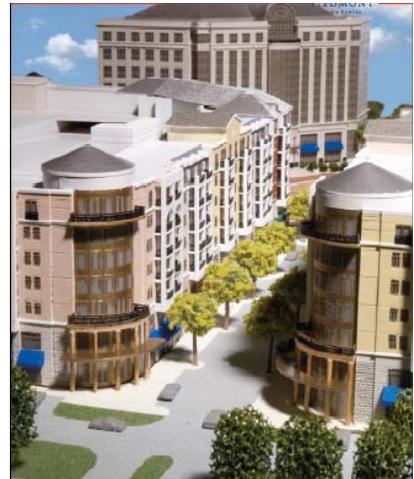
based on a Thursday afternoon in mid-December, there were only 64 cars in over 200 outdoor parking spaces, so even if all of the garage spaces were occupied, there still would be less than 0.5 cars per dwelling. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that any housing built on Sites A-E would require 0.5 parking spaces per unit to be vacant in the existing parking lots during business hours. Obviously, outside of business hours the parking lots would be largely empty providing more than sufficient parking for the housing.

Where shared parking is proposed and sufficient vacant parking spaces are available in the office park for both the office and residential uses, the approval of such shared parking will not create zoning non-compliance for the office use.

8. SITE CRITERIA

An analysis was made of Sites A-E to determine their capacity for the development of new housing. Several criteria were utilized for the location and size of apartment buildings.

- The apartment buildings should be located as close to the edges of the developed portion of the property as possible. This is where most of the large areas of vacant parking spaces are located, since they are most often furthest from the entrances to the office buildings. Setbacks from any residential areas should be the same as for office buildings. If feasible, there could be pedestrian connections to adjacent residential areas.



- The apartment buildings should be located to maintain the views from the existing office buildings.
- The apartment buildings should be located and designed so that there is no increase in stormwater runoff from the site.

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- The height of the apartment buildings should be compatible with the existing office buildings but not limited to the same height requirement.
- The apartment buildings should be clustered to create residential enclaves within the site separated from the other uses. Landscaping should be utilized to connect the buildings and provide buffering from the parking areas and surrounding uses and where possible amenities for the residents. Since the apartment buildings would not really be suitable for families with school age children, no play areas should be included.
- The apartment buildings should be located so as to avoid impacting the internal circulation in the parking areas.
- Green building and low impact development should be encouraged in the design of the site and buildings to reduce energy consumption, water consumption and stormwater pollution. Opportunities for such improvements should be investigated throughout the entire site.
- The number of apartments built must be directly related to the number of available vacant parking spaces during business hours. Based on the above study of apartments, there could be a maximum of two apartments built for every office parking space vacant during business hours. The count of the number of vacant parking spaces should be conservative.
 1. Only count vacant parking spaces in groups of at least four spaces even though many other vacant parking spaces may be scattered throughout the parking areas.
 2. Subtract from the number of vacant parking spaces, an estimate of the number of spaces that would be needed if the office buildings were at 100% occupancy. Most managers of office spaces consider 95% to be full occupancy allowing for some turnover. Use the worst case scenario to project the parking space requirement for the vacant office space.



This study found that Site B has the most occupied parking at 2.5 occupied parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of occupied office space

3. Subtract the number of existing parking spaces in the footprint of the new buildings. Add in any parking spaces to be provided under the new buildings.
4. If retail and/or service space is located in the first floor of the apartment buildings, it should be limited to those convenience uses that serve the residents of the apartments and workers in the offices who have already parked on site, thus requiring no additional parking spaces or creating additional traffic.

9. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The following are proposals based on schematic site plans (see maps) for the development of housing on Sites A-E. Sites B-E are all adjacent, and are configured in a row – a unique situation and opportunity – it is possible to cluster the apartment buildings in a way that eliminates some side yard and



rear yard setbacks, but still retain sufficient distance between all residential and office/hotel buildings. However, the site plan could alternatively have 50-foot side and rear yards. Any proposed development would require local site plan approval. The apartment buildings proposed for this analysis are 60 feet wide in various lengths from 150 feet to 240 feet and 12 stories in height, which are compatible in height to the other uses on the sites which are six stories in height. The building height could be reduced, resulting in fewer housing units.

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Site A

One 12 story apartment building 180 feet in length containing 121 apartments would require at least 61 parking spaces available during business hours. The site has:

- 156 vacant parking spaces
- 83 parking spaces required for the vacant office space at
2.5 parking spaces per 1,000 SF
- 30 parking spaces within the building footprint
- +22 parking spaces to be provided under the building
- 65 available parking spaces

Site B

Three 12 story apartment buildings respectively 150 feet, 180 feet and 210 feet in length containing a total of 363 apartments would require at least 182 parking spaces available during business hours. The site has:

- 537 vacant parking spaces (including satellite lot on Site C)
- 206 parking spaces required for the vacant office space at
2.5 parking spaces per 1,000 SF
- 50 parking spaces within the building footprints
- +66 parking spaces to be provided under the buildings
- 347 available parking spaces

Site C

One 12 story apartment building 210 feet in length containing a total of 143 apartments would require at least 72 parking spaces available during business hours. The site will have:

- 180 vacant parking spaces (on satellite lot on Site E)
- +28 parking spaces to be provided under the buildings
- 208 available parking spaces

Site D

Two 12 story apartment buildings respectively 180 feet and 210 feet in length containing a total of 264 apartments would require at least 132 parking spaces available during business hours.

The site has:

- 281 vacant parking spaces
- 123 parking spaces required for the vacant office space at
2.5 parking spaces per 1,000 SF
- 75 parking spaces within the building footprints
- +50 parking spaces to be provided under the buildings
- 133 available parking spaces

Site E

One 12 story apartment building 240 feet in length containing 165 apartments would require at least 83 parking spaces available during business hours. The site has:

- 220 vacant parking spaces (overflow lot)
- 35 parking spaces within the building footprint
- +34 parking spaces to be provided under the building
- 219 available parking spaces

10. CONCLUSIONS

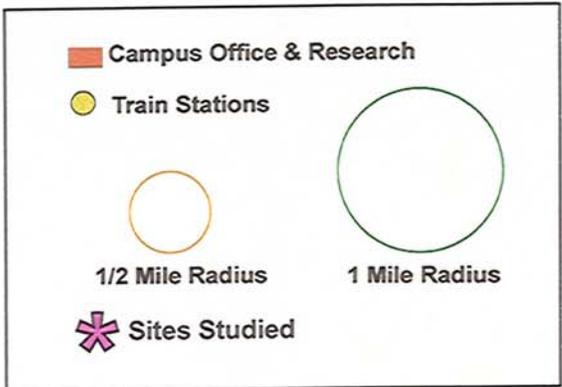
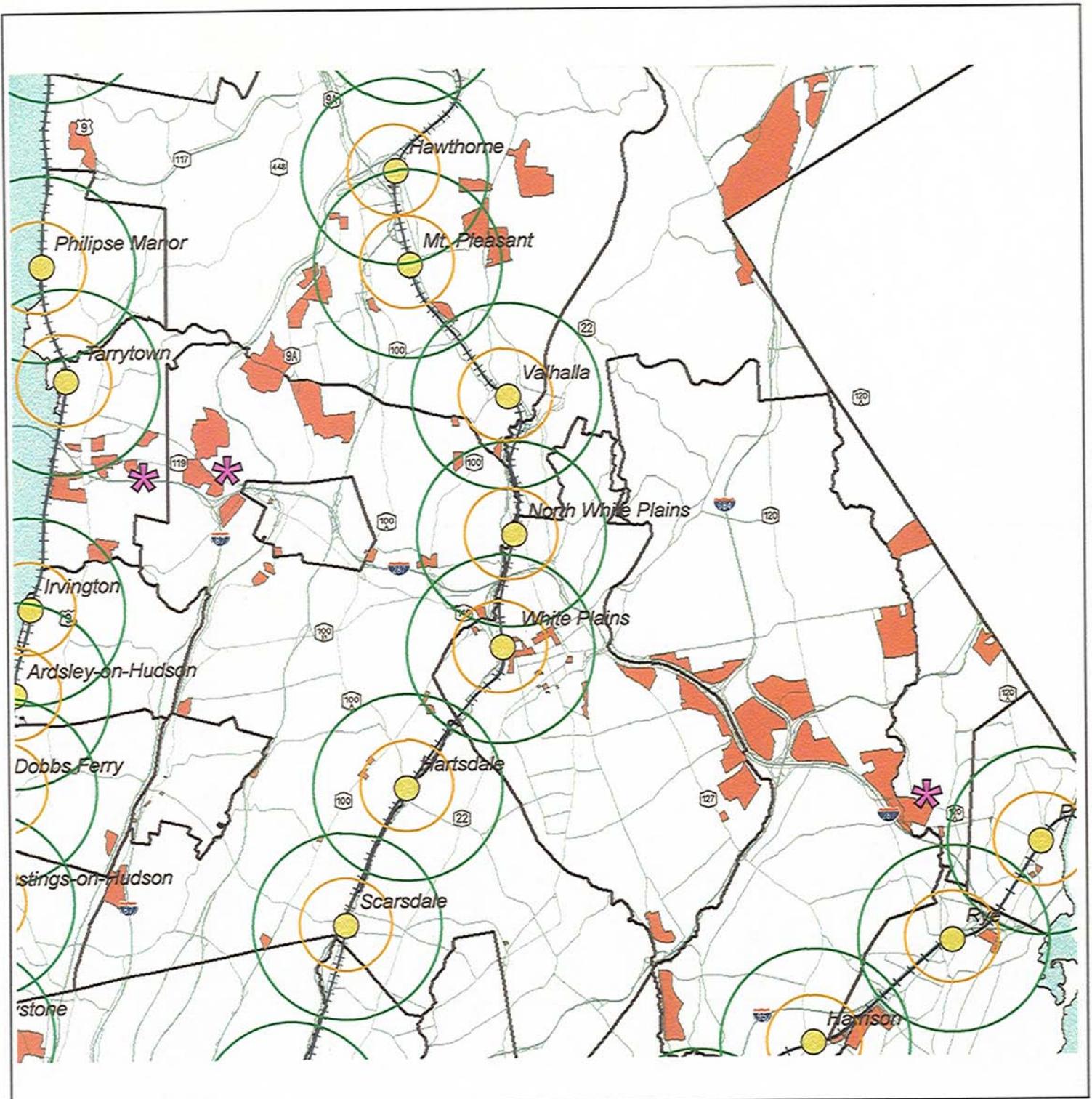
The above analysis of Sites A-E, demonstrates that it is feasible to add affordable housing to these office park sites with little impact on traffic, utilities or parking. There are sufficient parking spaces currently vacant during business hours to be shared with a substantial number of housing units. The zoning requirements in Tarrytown and Greenburgh of 3.3 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of office space exceed the actual office parking needed, and are sufficient to provide shared parking for residential development. Based on the schematic site plans, at least eight buildings containing 1,056 apartments in 12 story buildings could be developed on the sites -- 121 in Tarrytown and 935 in Greenburgh. If 15% of the units were affordable, a total of 158 -- 18 in Tarrytown and 140 in Greenburgh -- affordable units could be developed representing 17%

of Tarrytown’s and 20% of Greenburgh’s remaining obligation under the 2000-2015 Housing Allocation Plan. Again, if the apartment buildings were shorter, the number of units would be reduced.

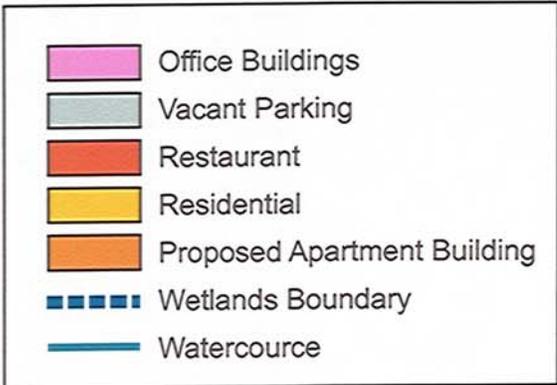
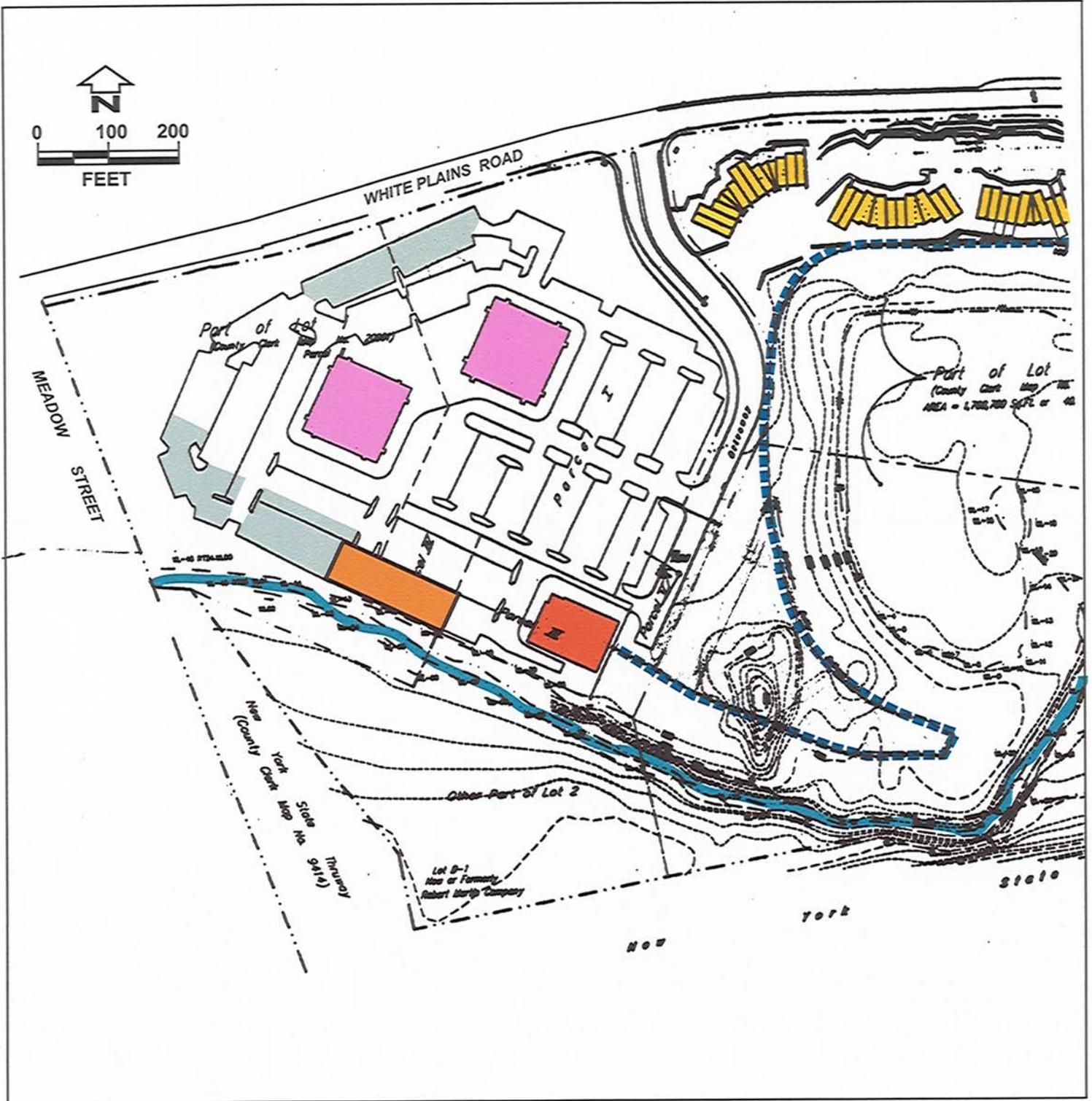
11. MODEL ZONING DISTRICT STANDARDS

Applicable Districts	Office Building; Mixed Use
Additional Permitted Uses	
• Residential	Two (2) multi-family dwelling units per available daytime parking space
• Retail	On ground floor of residential building
Residential Floor Area	Maximum 40% of total floor area on site
Residential Height	12 stories/130 feet
Distance between Principal Buildings	50 feet
Residential Setbacks	(1) Same as for office buildings for yards adjacent to residential areas and front yards (2) 50 feet for side yards and rear yards ¹
Required Residential Parking	0.5 parking spaces (daytime) per dwelling unit
Sources of Parking	(1) Shared Parking: Total office parking spaces provided less 2.5 parking spaces/1,000 SF total office space (2) Parking spaces under building, less existing parking spaces lost in building footprint (3) Utilization of previously required land banked parking
Affordable Units	15%

¹ Side and Rear Yard Setbacks may be reduced to 10 feet as part of site plan approval if, in the opinion of the approving authority, the revised setback will permit a building configuration that promotes the purposes of this ordinance without adverse impact on adjacent properties.



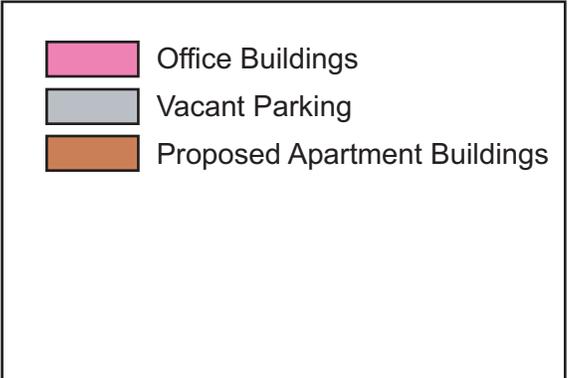
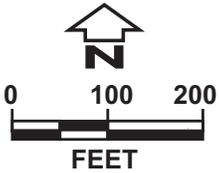
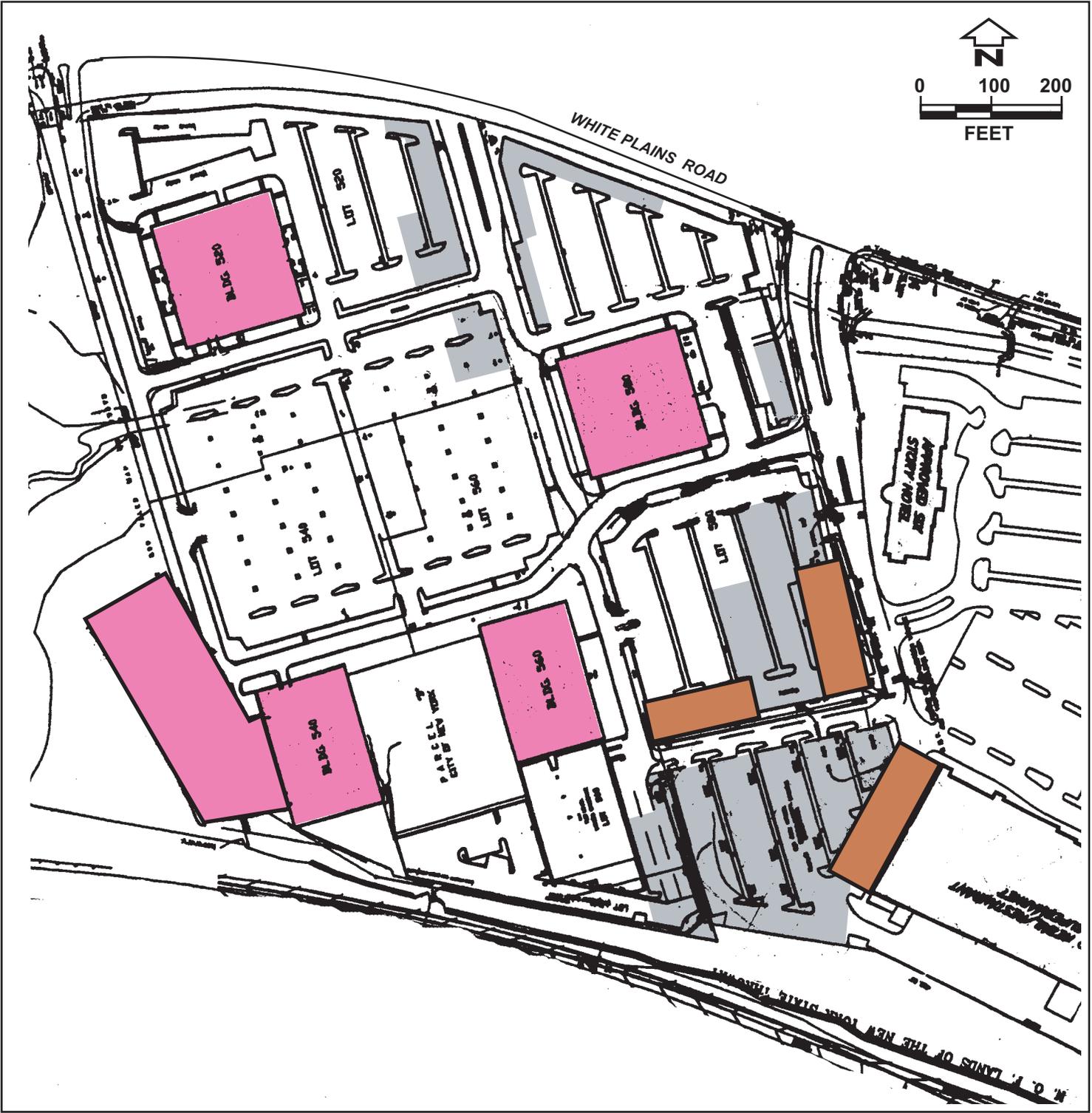
AREA MAP
OFFICE PARK STUDY
 RH Consulting 2/07



SITE A

OFFICE PARK STUDY

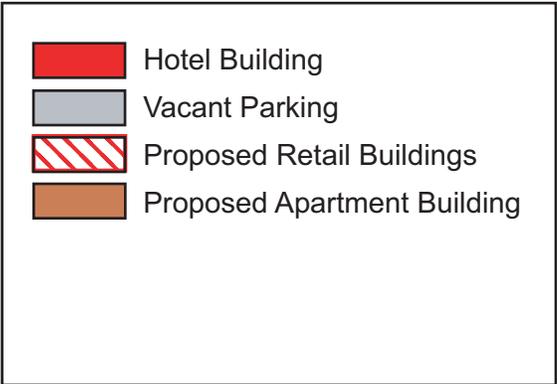
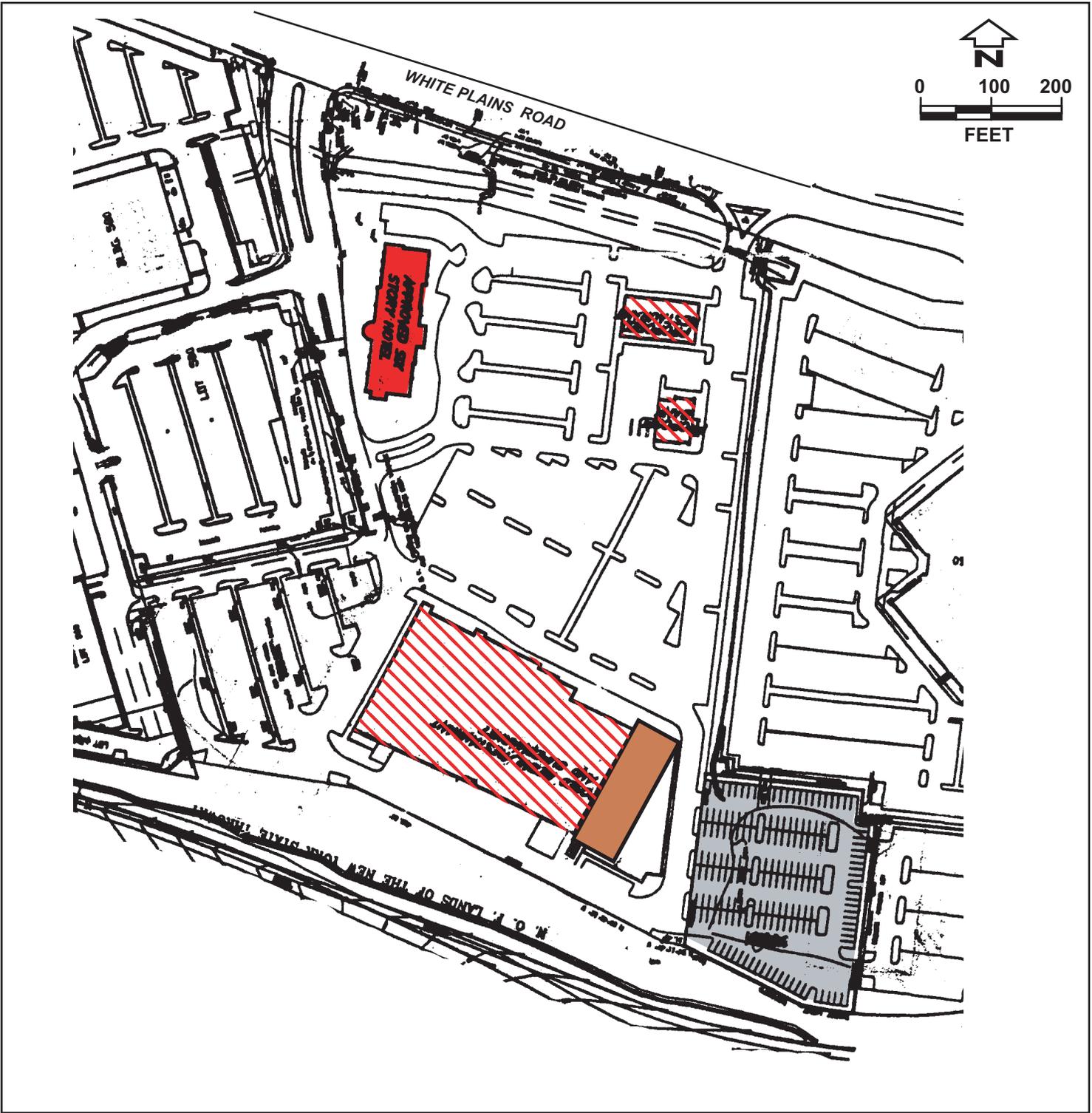
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SITE B

OFFICE PARK STUDY

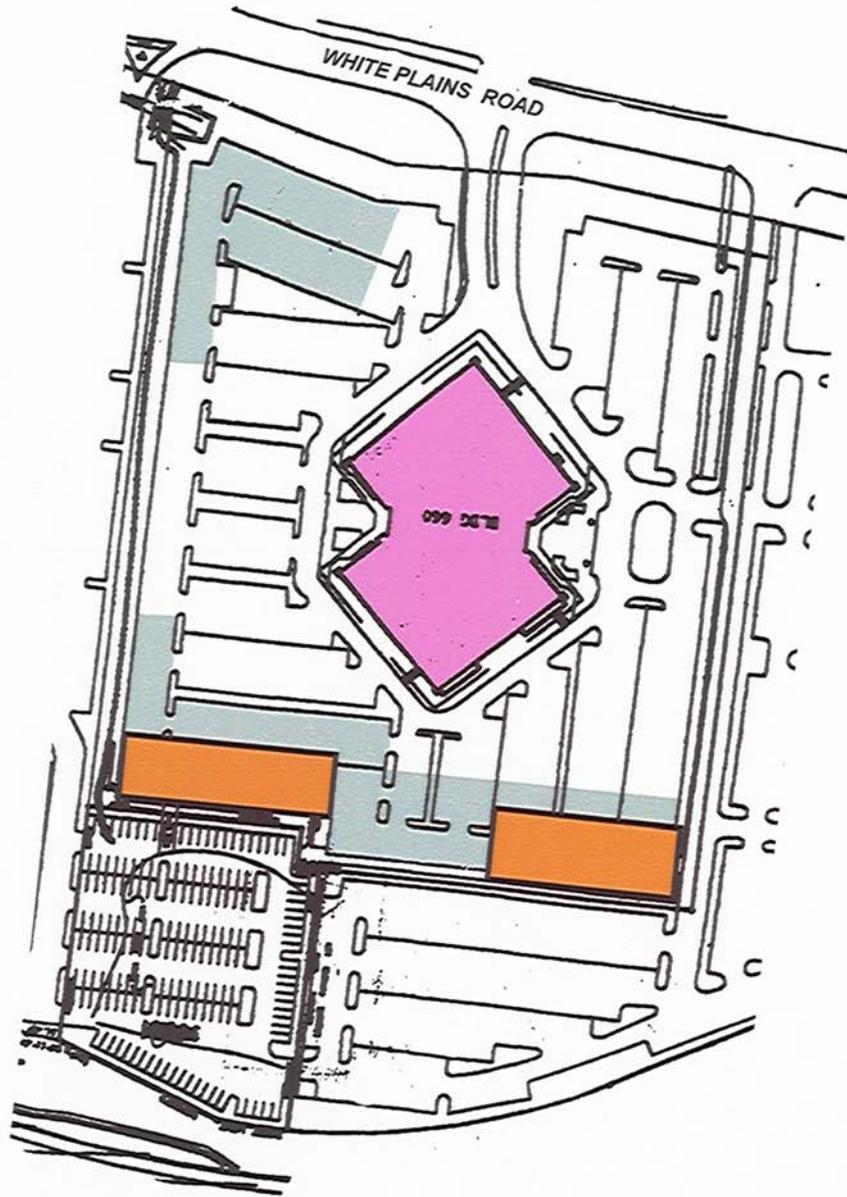
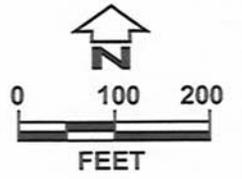
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SITE C

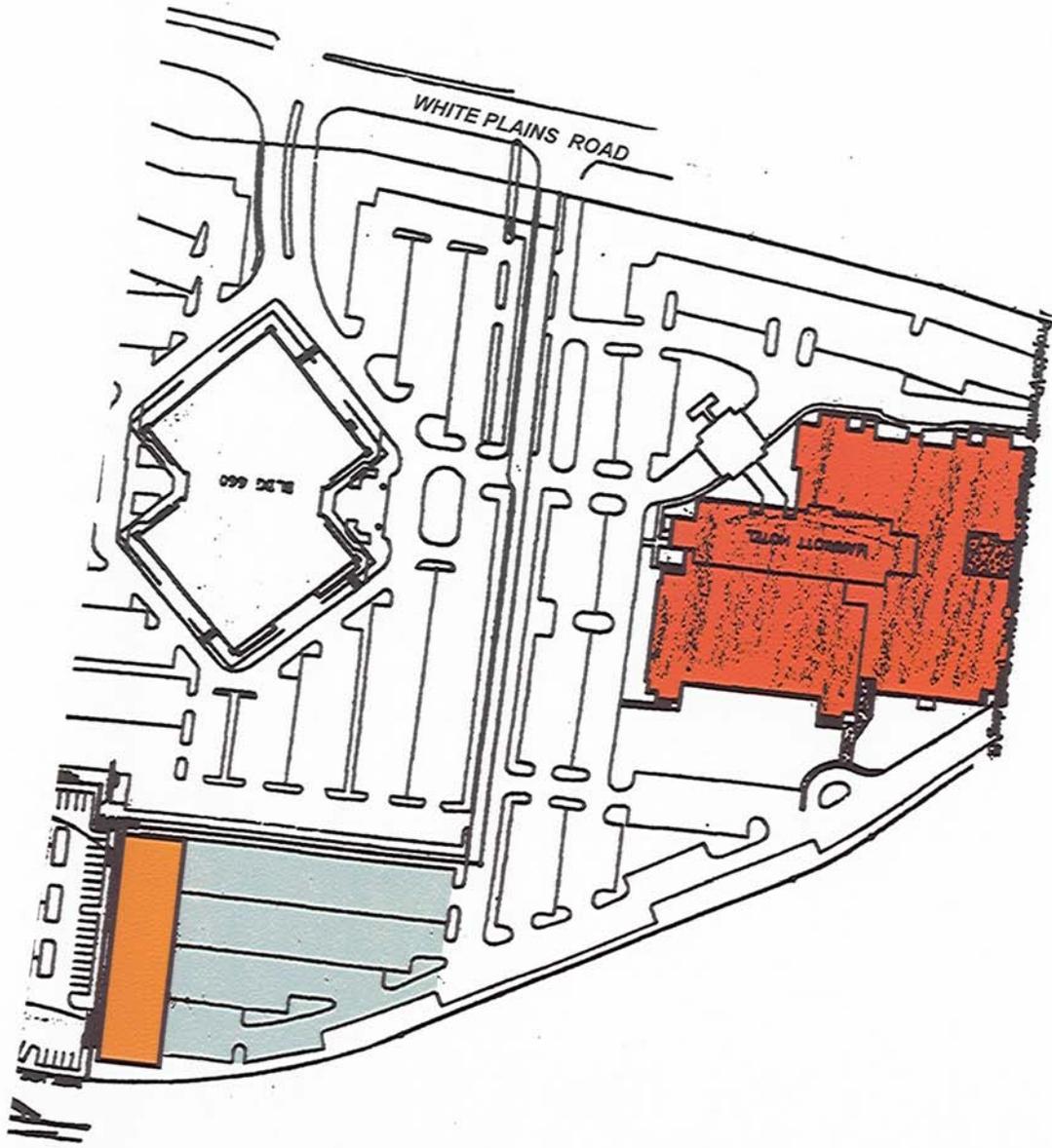
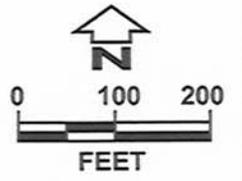
OFFICE PARK STUDY

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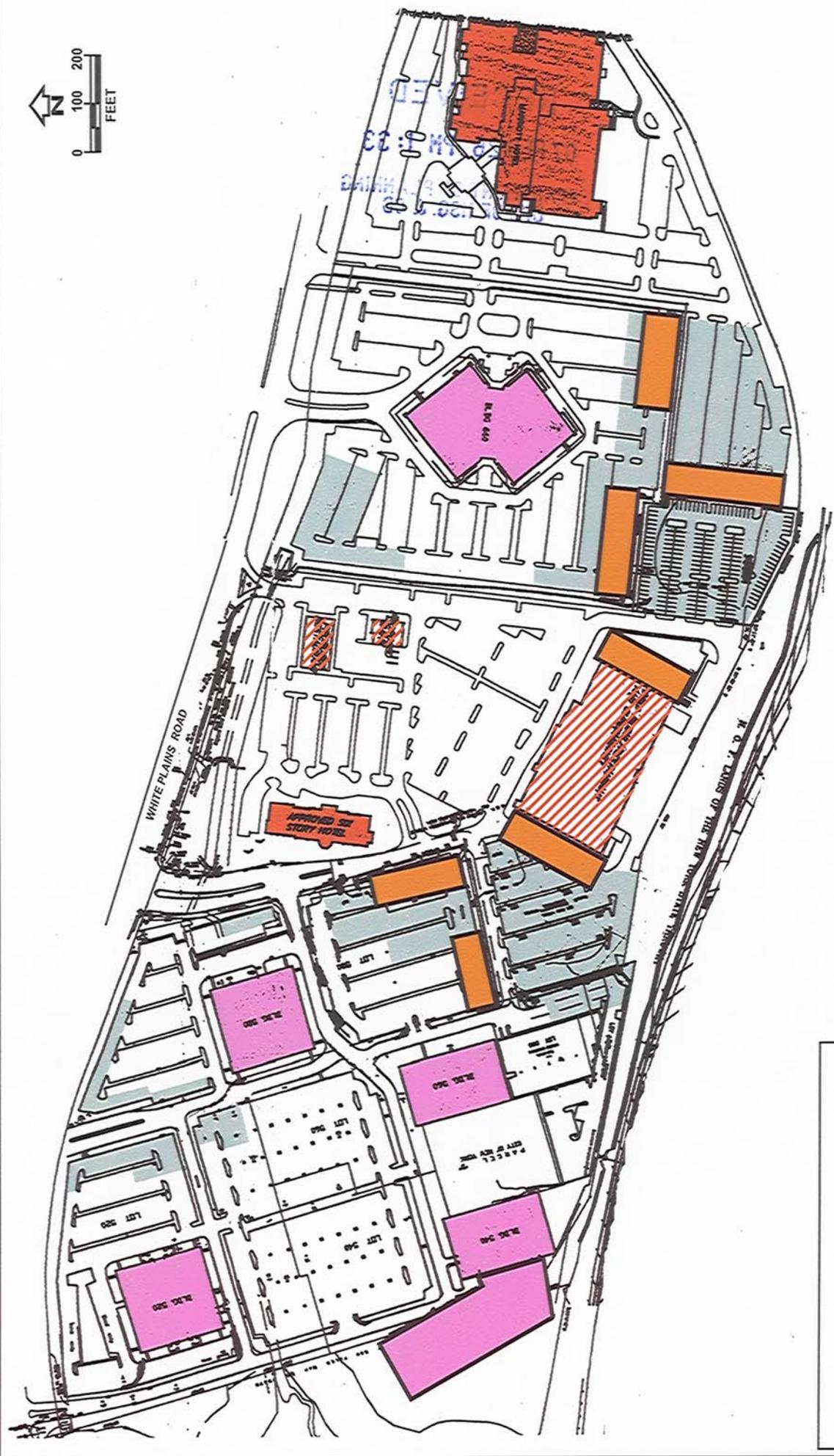
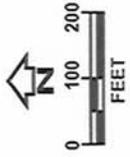
-  Office Building
-  Vacant Parking
-  Proposed Apartment Buildings

SITE D
OFFICE PARK STUDY
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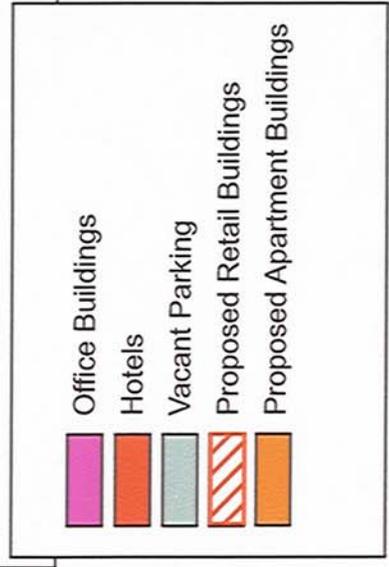


-  Hotel Building
-  Vacant Parking
-  Proposed Apartment Building

SITE E
OFFICE PARK STUDY
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SITES B-E
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