

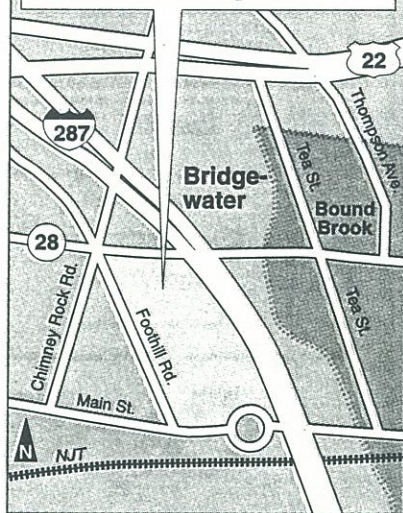
the 1996-97 school year.
 "It's the only business I know that

was in the parking lot of the new school, beaming over the fresh scenery in town, saying to the first students to enter the new build-

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Proposed retail and sports complex



C-N map by Andre Malok

Shopping center tied to park development

By JENNIFER BAUMAN
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■ Developers to formally propose change in zoning designation/B-3

BRIDGEWATER — A proposal to build a shopping center on part of the former American Cyanamid Corp. site could ensure that the rest of the property goes from Superfund site to public park, company officials said Wednesday.

Development of a 700,000-square-foot retail center, planned for 106 acres on the Hill property, would help American Home Products fund a multimillion-dollar environmental cleanup of the rest of the 575-acre site. Once the undeveloped land is cleaned up, it would be donated to the township or the county for open space.

But a plan to build a minor-league baseball stadium on that part of the site isn't the driving force behind the proposal, American Home Products officials said at a meeting with The Courier-News editorial board.

The company, which acquired the property when it merged with American Cyanamid, would deed-restrict the cleaned-up land so it can never be developed as anything other than parklands, said Thomas D. McCann, a senior director of the New York real estate firm of Williamson, Pickett, Gross, which is representing American Home Products.

Developers have proposed building

a "big-box" shopping center on the Hill property, on the northern 106 acres of the Cyanamid site, which has been declared environmentally clean.

The center — which could contain a supermarket, discount or department store, shops, restaurants, a bank, movie theaters and offices — would be limited to 700,000 square feet of retail space, McCann said.

Developers are asking township planners to change the zoning designation to allow retail and public uses. The land is currently zoned for manufacturing and office uses.

Consultants and developers met with a Planning Board subcommittee Wednesday evening, agreeing to present a formal zoning-change proposal to the full board, and to draw up a

developer's agreement that would set parameters and timetables for the project. No details of that agreement have been set yet.

Officials from the Somerset County Park Commission have proposed building a baseball stadium on a 25-acre tract adjacent to the shopping center.

McCann said that the company has no interest in a baseball stadium but that the stadium proposal could "add a little jazz to the area," he said.

But the goal is to donate most of the land as open space, either to the township or the county, he said. How the donations would be made has yet to be worked out, McCann said.

Mayor James Dowden said the township would welcome the donation of land.