

**REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
FOR
FRANKLIN AVENUE & MILL STREET
REDEVELOPMENT AREA**

TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE, ESSEX COUNTY

Adopted: March 13, 2009

PREPARED BY:



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INTRODUCTION

The Belleville Township Planning Board has recommended to the Township Council that an area located at the intersection of Mill Street and Franklin Avenue, which includes Block 3101, Lot 2 and Block 2401, Lot 3, be designated as an “Area in Need of Redevelopment”, according to the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL).¹ The Township Council approved this recommendation at its November 25, 2008 meeting and has requested the Planning Board to prepare a Redevelopment Plan for the area, in accordance with the LRHL.²

This plan is written pursuant to Section 6 of the LRHL, which states:

No area of a municipality shall be determined a redevelopment area unless the governing body of the municipality shall, by resolution, authorize the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the proposed area is a redevelopment area according to the criteria set forth in Section 5 of PL 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-5). Such determination shall be made after public notice and public hearing as provided in subsection b. of this section. The governing body of a municipality shall assign the conduct of the investigation and hearing to the Planning Board of the municipality.

The same legislation further states:

After completing its hearing on this matter, the Planning Board shall recommend that the delineated area, or any part thereof, be determined, or not be determined, by the municipal governing body to be a redevelopment area. After receiving the recommendation of the Planning Board, the municipal governing body may adopt a resolution determining that the delineated area, or any part thereof, is a redevelopment area.

This Redevelopment Plan has been prepared in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7a, which provides that redevelopment projects may only be undertaken or carried out in accordance with a redevelopment plan adopted by ordinance of the municipal governing body, upon its findings that the specifically delineated project area is located in an area in need of redevelopment or in an area in need of rehabilitation, or in both, according to the criteria set forth in section 5 or section 14 of the LRHL.

¹ Planning Board Resolution memorialized November, 13, 2008

² Township Council Resolution #08-322, November 25, 2008

REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The Area consists of two parcels, which total 4.101 acres. Block 3101, Lot 2 is owned by Belleville Township, while Block 2401, Lot 3 is owned by Conrail Corporation. The Township parcel is partially occupied by the Belleville Senior Citizen Center and its associated parking lot. The Conrail property is an abandoned rail spur, whose track has largely been removed.

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES OF REDEVELOPMENT

The purpose of the Redevelopment Plan is to use existing parcels to improve public health and general welfare by providing affordable housing conveniently located to municipal services and public transportation. The objectives of Redevelopment are as follows:

1. Provide affordable senior housing and
2. Diversify the existing housing stock.

RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL OBJECTIVES

A. Intent and Purpose of the Master Plan

During the course of 2008, Belleville produced a revised Master Plan. The Plan, adopted on January 8, 2009, includes nineteen objectives for the Township. Of the total, four directly relate to the Redevelopment Plan, they are as follows:

1. To continue to encourage a wide variety of housing types at a range of sale and rental levels so that all types of families at all income groups can be housed in Belleville; to provide for residential growth at current densities and permit high density development in limited areas, during the time span of this Master Plan.
2. To continue to encourage a balance of land uses to include diversified residential areas, commercial areas to serve the residents of Belleville and nearby communities, and office industrial areas to provide jobs and strengthen the tax base.
3. To encourage the construction of senior citizens housing for Belleville's low and moderate income senior citizens.
4. To conduct the Township's planning program within the framework of a regional setting and fully cognizant of the needs and rights of Belleville's neighboring communities and Essex County.

Additionally, the 2009 Master Plan proposed a number of policies that the Redevelopment Plan implements. With regards to senior housing, the Master Plan proposes the Township continue to pursue affordable senior housing projects and encourage senior housing as a part of redevelopment projects. The Master Plan also lists potential redevelopment areas that should be studied in the future. It was recommended that “redevelopment action be considered to implement an affordable housing senior citizen project adjacent to the Belleville Senior Citizen Recreation Center building at Franklin Avenue and Mill Street”.³

B. Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

On October 30, 2008, the Planning Board adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. This Plan addresses the Council on Affordable Housing’s (COAH) mandated affordable housing obligation of 123 units for the Third Round. The municipality used a number of mechanisms throughout the Township to meet the obligation. As senior housing has been an ongoing goal of Belleville’s, it was a key component to incorporate in the Plan. The Redevelopment Area was included in the Housing Plan proposing the provision of 30 affordable housing credits, which would serve seniors. Additional units located in the redevelopment area could be used as credit towards Belleville’s rehabilitation obligation of 249 units.

PROPOSED LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The Redevelopment Plan calls for creating a zone called Senior Housing and Services Zone which will include only Block 3101, Lot 2 and Block 2401, Lot 3. This Redevelopment Plan shall supersede all applicable provisions of the Township’s Zoning Regulations. The proposed land uses – multi-family senior residential, senior services, public space and surface parking – are all permitted in the Senior Housing and Services Zone.

The development standards proposed for the Senior Housing and Services Zone are as follows:

- Minimum lot area: 2.5 acres
- Lot frontage: 100’ (Mill Street)
- Minimum front yard: 6’ (Mill Street)
- Minimum side yards: 6’
- Minimum rear yards: 9’ building, 5’ parking
- Maximum building height: 60’
- Maximum building coverage: 32%

³ Belleville Township Master Plan, adopted January 8, 2009, page 38

- Maximum impervious coverage: 70%
- Maximum density: 55 DU/AC with a total maximum of 161 units
- Maximum FAR: 1.5

Other requirements are as follows:

- **Senior Citizen Center**
 - Shall have a minimum lot area of 0.90 acres
 - Shall have at least 60 designated useable parking spaces
- **Affordability**
 - Bedroom distribution: At least 10% of all units shall be 2 bedroom units
 - All units shall be deed restricted for a minimum of 30 years and have rents that meet the requirements of NJAC 5:97 and 5:96
- **Parking**
 - 0.5 parking spaces shall be provided for each unit
 - Provisions to assure adequate on-site parking or alternate transportation arrangements to accommodate the parking and transportation needs of residents of the senior housing development shall be established at the site plan stage
 - Parking lot shall be landscaped
 - Parking lot shall provide adequate turning radius for emergency vehicles and refuse pickup
- **Landscaping & Open Space**
 - Front and rear yards shall be landscaped and existing vegetation should be preserved as much as possible
 - Open space shall provide a separate bocce court area or similar recreational facility of at least 2,500 square feet with benches, a landscaped walking path, landscaped seating area, patio and outdoor chess tables

RELOCATION

The Redevelopment Area includes two owners, one public, and the other private. The public property is owned by Belleville Township and is currently used for the Senior Center, which will remain in place and operation. The private property is an abandoned rail spur that presents no relocation issues. No temporary or permanent relocation of residents is contemplated, since there are no residential units currently located in the Redevelopment Area.

PROPERTIES TO BE ACQUIRED

Block 3101, Lot 2 is owned by Belleville Township, while Block 2401, Lot 3 is owned by Norfolk Southern Corporation and may have to be acquired by eminent domain if an agreement cannot be established.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The Redevelopment Area is solely concerned with a portion of the existing RA-2, RA-1 and R-B Zone. Its adoption will not impact other communities or their Master Plans. The Plan is not expected to have any significant effect on County Roads or utilities. Essex County's Master Plan Land Use Element was completed in 1969 and is outdated.

The 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan places Belleville Township in the PA(1) Metropolitan Planning Area. PA(1)s are supposed to provide for much of the "state's future redevelopment; revitalize cities and towns; promote growth in compact forms; stabilize older suburbs; redesign areas of sprawl; and protect the character of existing stable communities"⁴. The Redevelopment Plan has a significant relationship to the SDRP by meeting many of the objectives for PA(1) areas. The objectives that the Redevelopment Plan advances are as follows:

- Land use: promote redevelopment and development
- Land use: promote diversification of land uses, including housing where appropriate
- Housing: provide a full range of housing choice through redevelopment, new construction and rehabilitation
- Transportation: enhance a transportation system that capitalizes on high-density settlement patterns by encouraging use of public transit systems and walking (there is a New Jersey Transit bus stop at the intersection of Franklin Avenue and Mill Street in front of the Senior Center)
- Redevelopment: encourage redevelopment at intensities sufficient to support transit
- Promote design that reduces dependency on the automobile

Potential spillover benefits resulting from the Plan could include the provision of safe, affordable senior housing in an area that lacks this particular housing choice.

⁴ State Development and Redevelopment Plan, 2001

RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL ZONING

Over the past year Belleville has been analyzing where future development and density is appropriate in the Township during the creation of its Master Plan and Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. Certain areas of the Township have been recommended for increases in density to make development and redevelopment attractive and economically feasible. Increases in density to 24 dwelling units per acre have been recommended for inclusionary development, which includes both market-rate and affordable units. Permitting 55 units per acre in the Redevelopment Area is higher than other proposed densities, but the development is providing a 100% affordable project for the Township's benefit. Local zoning has encouraged senior housing and multi-family housing and the proposed zone will advance this objective of the Township.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE LOCAL MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

The Redevelopment Plan as proposed is "substantially consistent" with the municipal master plan and furthers a number of policies that the municipality has set for development and growth within its borders. In addition, the Plan is consistent with a number of the SDRP's objectives for PA(1) areas. The Plan will provide for a housing typology that is in high demand not only in Belleville, but in surrounding municipalities as well.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

According to Borough Engineer, Tom Herits, water and sewer infrastructure is satisfactory. The Township is applying for FEMA funding to widen the existing bridge to the Senior Center and rehabilitate the bridge to the west.

POLICIES FOR USE OF LONG AND SHORT TERM PROPERTY TAX INCENTIVES

The Township of Belleville will work with the redeveloper to attain grants and tax incentives to make this affordable senior housing development a reality in Belleville.