

Bedminster Township

Master Plan Reexamination Report

January 2021

Adopted:

Prepared by
Bedminster Township Land Use Board
with Assistance from
Banisch Associates, Inc.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bedminster's Master Plan has long sought to preserve the Township's scenic countryside and unspoiled natural places, with growth areas limited to the villages of Pluckemin and Bedminster and the State highway corridors. Regional planning initiatives at the State level and affordable housing mandates have helped shape the local landscape, through open, transparent policy development with extensive public participation.

Most Bedminster residents live in the villages of Pluckemin and Bedminster, most in the planned development at The Hills. The product of a builder's remedy lawsuit, The Hills brought an abundance of affordable housing strategically situated along the interstate highway network. However, as these neighborhoods approach 35 years of age, maintenance and repair issues are increasingly burdensome upon homeowners associations and their members.

This 2020 Master Plan Reexamination follows the 2018 Reexamination during a time of land use change owing to changing market forces and the rearranged employment landscape of the Covid era. Bedminster's Master Plan was last comprehensively updated in 2003, when market forces were still generally supportive of massive amounts of suburban commercial and office space. The commercial and office sectors have since come under constantly increasing pressure, with most single user corporate campuses now a thing of the past and many long stable retailers either going out of business or jettisoning the costs of brick and mortar whenever possible. The changes these trends have wrought are not yet in a mature phase. Rather, the disruptions initially caused by these market changes have been compounded by Covid 19 and will have impacts on land use patterns that are not yet fully known.

Residential taxpayers are increasingly picking up a larger share of the tax burden in communities across New Jersey as corporate offices in the suburbs are no longer the dominant employment centers and tax ratables they once were. When Bedminster's 2018 Periodic Reexamination Report was adopted, it noted the deepness of the 2008 economic recession and noted that AT&T had sold off its *Long Lines* campus, to become a tenant, as it expanded facilities in other states, prompting concerns that its tenure in Bedminster may be coming to an end.

Protecting the environment, conserving community character, retaining farms and protecting Bedminster's history remain key objectives of the Master Plan. However, the Land Use Board's evaluation of local policies and regulations in 2020, as in 2018, suggests that economic and fiscal health must be further emphasized if the Township is to remain an affordable and desirable place. This requires a varied mix of ratables and a diversified commercial marketplace, where many types of businesses employ many types of skills.

Village vitality, which comes from the interaction of people with culture, economic opportunity and one another, is another concern. Bedminster village and Pluckemin, Bedminster's principal villages, are walkable places where restaurants should be abundant and where needed goods and services should be close at hand. However,

Bedminster's Main Street mostly goes dark at night, having seen the near wholesale office and retail conversion of former residences. Pluckemin has seen a vast infusion of auto-dependent land uses (housing, shopping and offices) and has lost some of the scenic and cultural qualities of the place. Bedminster should focus on capitalizing on the Township's walkable historic villages, which are truly at the crossroads of history, and pursue strategies that enhance village life, particularly after 5 pm.

The Township has nearly three times the number of affordable housing units and credits required to fulfill its constitutional affordable housing obligation. However, according to the compliance judgment rendered on October 16, 2018 by Judge Thomas Miller, J.S.C. and the settlement with the Fair Share Housing Center, Bedminster is to zone, or otherwise create a realistic opportunity, for 28 affordable family rental units by the summer of 2021. This reexamination recognizes this commitment and responds with a plan to fully satisfy this obligation.

STATUTORY AUTHORIZATION

The Municipal Land Use Law, at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89, includes the following statement relative to the periodic examination of a municipal master plan:

" The governing body shall, at least every 10 years, provide for a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations by the Land Use Board, which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination, a copy of which report and resolution shall be sent to the Office of Planning Advocacy and the county Land Use Board."

N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 requires that the reexamination report shall state:

- a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- c. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
- d. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared."

e. The recommendations of the Land Use Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et seq.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality."

PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES IN 2018 AS SEEN TODAY

The 2018 Reexamination Report cited the following continuing objectives from the 2000 and 2008 Reexamination Reports:

1. Maintaining the special character of the villages, and the rural and country atmosphere, which prevails throughout most of the Township.
2. Continuing to manage the "sweeping changes" which occurred as a result of Court-mandated Mount Laurel housing.
3. Protecting the environment and conserving fragile natural resources.
4. Managing and encouraging other government agencies to manage traffic impacts.
5. Preserving farmland and expansion of the industry of agriculture according to best management standards.
6. Improving access to local plans and regulations.
7. Conforming local plans and ordinances with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) policies affecting Planning Area 5 and "centers".

Of the 35 recommendations in the 2000 Master Plan Reexamination, designed to advance the objectives above, nearly all the recommended changes to the Master Plan and Land Use Ordinance had been accomplished by 2008. Recommendations to advance those remaining objectives in the 2008 Reexamination Report included:

- Scenic Landscape Protection Strategies for the R-10 and gateways, which were recommended but not adopted.
- Lighting for safety and security without excessive lighting, which may merit continued study.
- Expanded sustainability initiatives.
- Deer fencing impacts and how the right to farm allows these tall fences.
- Golf Course requirements, which were expanded to include more municipal oversight and monitoring.
- Potential expansion of Sewer Service Areas to remediate septic failures within the developed sector north of Bedminster Village.

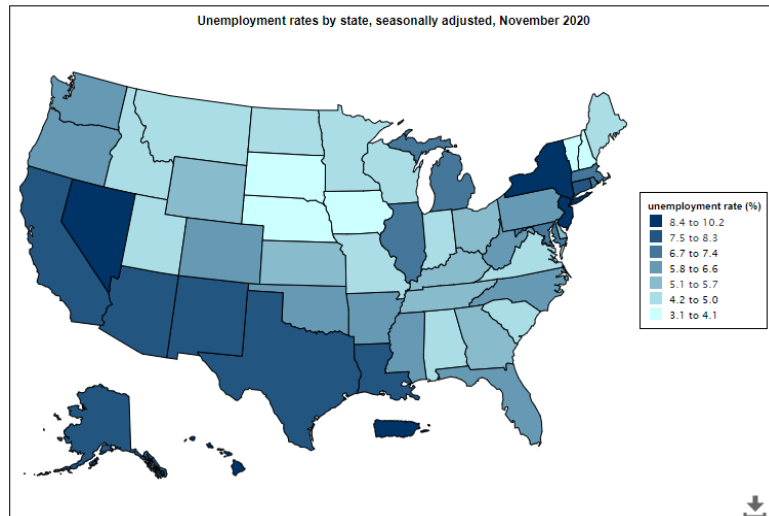
While the 2008 Reexamination Report did not cite fiscal or economic concerns, the 2018 Reexamination highlighted these increasingly important planning considerations.

CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES SINCE 2008

The master plan process in Bedminster has been a fluid one that has adjusted local policies to address changing times, with preserving and protecting the quality of life

remaining paramount. The Master Plan and Land Management Ordinance have provided for a balanced Land Use Plan that recognized the potential of the highway growth corridor to accommodate regional employment, commerce and housing, including the expansive planned development at The Hills. Bedminster's plan has long constrained the area for development, limiting growth to the highway corridor and villages and maximizing the retention of farmland and open space in Bedminster's countryside.

In 2021, as the Land Use Board examines the findings of the 2018 Reexamination Report, New Jersey is still lagging behind the rest of the Nation in terms of economic recovery. The State's unemployment rate fell by 4.4 percentage points in September 2020 to 6.7%, a drop attributed to workers leaving the labor force altogether. This was below the national



unemployment rate for September of 7.9%. However, in November 2020 New Jersey had a higher unemployment rate (10.2%) than any other state, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). This is particularly troubling, since the unemployment rate a year earlier was a low 3.7%. Thus, the observation in 2018 that New Jersey's recovery was lagging behind the Nation's is even more true in the midst of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

In this economic climate, paying extra attention to maintaining and increasing the ratable base is increasingly important, since the employers that anchor the highway frontages and the tax revenues they provide help keep residential taxes in check.

The 2017 Federal tax cuts, which are extremely disadvantageous to New Jersey residents, have increased the burden of local property taxes and income taxes on Bedminster residents. Local land use policies should be tailored to blunt these impacts and retain a diverse ratable base. In this economic climate, paying extra attention to maintaining and increasing the ratable base is increasingly important, since the employers that anchor the highway frontages and the tax revenues they provide help keep residential taxes in check. In assessing the changes that have occurred since 2018, the Land Use Board also found that the problems and objectives relating to land use and development include the following:

Managing Change in Bedminster's Growth Corridor

In this time of land use change, Bedminster should continually assess the long-term viability of the mix of land uses along the State/Interstate highway corridors, particularly

as a function of the Master Plan Reexamination. As the electronic age and the internet continued to reduce the demand for bricks and mortar retail and office space, office tenants in 2018 were being wooed from suburban office locations to more urban, walkable and transit-served locales, and the central New Jersey suburban office market was undergoing a major contraction. In 2020, however, COVID-19 has emptied city streets and neighborhoods, at least temporarily, and called into question the assumptions that office workers will return to their offices as before and that those offices will be in cities.

The 2018 Reexamination cited discouraging assessment trends in Bedminster, where major office buildings had seen significant reductions in assessments. As noted in the 2018 Reexam, in 2016 Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals acquired the office campus on Route 206 adjacent to Clarence Dillon Library, and in October 2017 brought over 300 jobs to its new Specialty Brands office in Bedminster. Mallinckrodt, based in London, manufactures and distributes products used in diagnostic procedures and in the treatment of pain and related conditions. This includes the development, manufacture and distribution of specialty pharmaceuticals, active pharmaceutical ingredients, contrast products and radiopharmaceuticals.

In the aftermath of the Great Recession, being part of a pharma/life sciences cluster is increasingly valuable to all participants. Mallinckrodt's new location in Bedminster appears to be part of such an evolving cluster. In adjoining Bridgewater, Nestle Health Science now anchors the 110-acre research site (formerly Sanofi Research), with a \$70 million "global research and development hub that will advance the company's offerings in further elevating the power of nutrition to make a positive difference in people's lives". The Nestlé Product Technology Center in Bridgewater is the lead Product Technology Center for Nestlé Health Science globally, part of a strong network of R&D centers advancing healthier lives through nutrition.

Maintaining viability for Bedminster's office inventory will require attention to evolving market dynamics as current trends continue to play out. Bedminster should better understand the factors that could result in loss of such a high-profile tenant as AT&T, and how to reposition the AT&T campus, strategically located from many perspectives, as a 21st century mixed-use environment. Situated between a major regional highway interchange (I-78 and I-287) and the Far Hills train station and midway between Bedminster and Pluckemin villages, the AT&T site is positioned well to adapt to changing times – if local policies support such changes. A planning grant from the NJ Highlands Council has provided for an evaluation of appropriate strategies for managing change at the former ATT campus, including potential redevelopment opportunities.

The regional office node in Pluckemin, which is a walkable activity center, should remain vital, since it consists of a mix of office users of different sizes. This suggests continuing market appeal for offices in Pluckemin, which would be enhanced by greater diversity of commercial establishments and more and varied places to eat.

Village Vitality and Tourism Walkable downtowns, where the arts, culture, entertainment and shopping are attractions, are energizing villages and downtowns across America. As the 21st Century progresses, the most desirable downtowns are the more walkable places that capitalize on their history and culture to create an experiential attractiveness. Clusters of dining establishments, fine and casual, are elements around which successful downtowns are built and rebuilt time and again.

Bedminster and Pluckemin are walkable places blessed with an authenticity in the landscape and structures that date back to the American Revolution. The wealth and prominence of these resources (Pluckemin Artillery, Vanderveer House, Washington's Route monument) sets the stage for a more diverse and interesting experience for visitors to Pluckemin and Bedminster villages.

The Revolutionary War initiative known as "Crossroads of the Revolution" is particularly relevant in Pluckemin and the surrounding countryside. Military training at West Point is the successor to and follows a military tradition begun by General Henry Knox at the Pluckemin Artillery. Artifacts recovered from the Pluckemin Dig are extensive and can provide a rich interpretive opportunity related to the Revolutionary War period.

New Jersey saw more Revolutionary War battles than any other state. The Jacobus Vanderveer House and Museum has been restored and plays an important role in the Crossroads of the Revolution initiative, which has not yet seized upon an opportune location for a Revolutionary War museum. Expanding cultural tourism offers benefits that resonate with the town's image and intentions.

If cultural tourism is deemed an appropriate avenue for further pursuit, Bedminster should explore with the Crossroads of the Revolution how an interpretive facility related to the Pluckemin Artillery could be developed in the Township.

Secondary Focus Area #8: Tourism (Low Priority)

Although tourism is a billion-dollar industry in Somerset County, tourism assets have traditionally been under-valued. Recently, the County implemented efforts to leverage tourism-related assets that include hotels and motels, a convention center, significant catering facilities, historic sites, extensive parks and recreation facilities (including the County Parks system and Duke Farms), and major annual events, such as the Tour of Somerville Bicycle Race and the Far Hill Race Meeting. The County is fortunate to be home to the US Golf Association and the US Equestrian Team. These assets, as well as historical features dating back to colonial times, present opportunities to increase tourism-related economic activity in the region.

Goals and Objectives

- Deploy resources necessary to manage attendance and visitation to high-attendance events, thus reducing community road and highway impacts.
- Implement targeted tourism promotional activities to leverage local hospitality industry assets and to increase regional economic activity.

Strategic Projects, Programs, and Activities

The following are examples of projects related to tourism promotion that are contained in the Strategic Project Inventory found at Addendum 5.

EXAMPLE PROJECTS: TOURISM		
PROJECTS	DESCRIPTION	FUNDING SOURCES
HISTORIC TOWNS NETWORK	Create a Historic Towns of Somerset/Main Street Network to publicize and market attractions and activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street New Jersey • New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism • SCBP
EQUINE CONNECTIONS	Enhance equine industry connections with New Jersey's tourism industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism • New Jersey Travel Industry Association
TV AND TOURISM	Expand the Somerset County CEDS by examining tourism-related strategies and actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism • USEDPA

The Center for Contemporary Art, housed in the former Pluckemin Schoolhouse, attracts those who want to learn and is a prime venue for local artists. Building on the arts experiences at the Pluckemin Schoolhouse Center for Contemporary Arts, Bedminster should explore policies to promote additional arts activities and venues in Pluckemin and elsewhere in Bedminster Township.

Affordable Housing

Bedminster Township approved 694 affordable units in inclusionary developments at The Hills and Timberbrooke and at Pluckemin Park Senior Housing and has earned another 300 affordable unit credits through the extension of expiring controls on some of these units. These developments produced over 3,000 total housing units and far exceeded any COAH obligation.

In 2018, Bedminster and the Fair Share Housing Center entered into a settlement in response to Bedminster's Declaratory Judgment lawsuit that more than fully addresses a 379-unit fair share obligation for the period 1987 to 2025. That settlement agreement and the applicable COAH rules provided the basis for Bedminster's 2018 Fair Share Plan.

Bedminster's 154-unit prior round obligation for 1987-1999 was more than fully satisfied by the 694 units noted below.

Affordable Units Applied to Prior Round (1987-1999)			
		Type	
Prior Round and Third Round	Units	Rental	Sales
The Hills – Parkside - Family	216	54	162
The Hills- Village Green - Family	260	0	260
The Hills – Cortland - Family	144	48	96
Timberbrooke - Family	24	0	24
Pluckemin Park - Senior	50	50	0
Total	694	152	542

Up to 25% of the 154-unit obligation is permitted as rental bonuses, allowing up to 38 rental bonuses for the prior round obligation, bringing the carry forward total to nearly 600 units and bonus credits. (694 units + 38 rental bonus = 732 total units/credits minus 154 unit obligation = 578).

The Township also has a present need (rehabilitation) obligation of 2 units and will utilize surplus new construction credits to satisfy the 2-unit obligation.

Bedminster Township will substantially exceed its 225-unit third round obligation through the surplus credits and rental bonuses from the prior round and the COAH-approved substantial compliance reduction as detailed below.

Affordable Units and Bonus Credits Available for Third Round - (1999-2025)			
Fourth Round	Units	Credits/Reductions	Totals
Excess from prior rounds	540	38	578
Substantial Compliance Reduction		46	46
Extended Affordability Controls	300*		300
Rental Bonus Maximum for all Rounds = 94 (25% of 379)		56	56
TOTAL	840	140	980

When these 980 units and credits are applied against the 225-unit third round fair share obligation approved by the Court, 755 units/credits remain available to be applied to the fourth and future rounds. Despite the large surplus of affordable units/credits, Bedminster's affordable housing obligation under the Settlement Agreement requires the construction of 28 family rental units to meet the third round family rental obligation, including 4 very low income units. Bedminster committed to developing a plan for these units by the July 2021 mid-point review and this reexamination in part responds to that commitment.

The Land Use Board has evaluated opportunities to address the 28-unit rental obligation and concluded that it should be satisfied by providing 5 affordable units at the approved mixed retail and apartment project under construction by Elite Properties at Bedminster, LLC.

Changes in State, County and Municipal Policies and Objectives

The following changes or updates to State, County and regional policies and objectives occurred since the 2018 Reexamination Report and are provided here for informational purposes.

1. **Performance Guarantees** - The MLUL was amended on January 16, 2018 providing an update to performance and maintenance guarantee regulatory controls. The amendment provides that municipalities may only require developers to post performance guarantees that cover improvements being dedicated to a public entity or to assure survival of privately owned perimeter buffer landscaping. The MLUL now authorizes municipalities to require two additional types of guarantees including temporary certificate of occupancy guarantees (120% of the cost of installation of improvements) and safety and stabilization guarantees that will provide a municipality with funding to return property to a safe and stable condition or to implement measures to protect the public from access to an unsafe or unstable condition.

2. **Statement of Strategy** - On January 8, 2018, the New Jersey State Legislature adopted bill A-4540/S-2873 requiring any new land use element to incorporate a statement of strategy addressing the following issues: A. Smart growth including potential locations for electric vehicle charging stations; B. Storm resiliency with respect to energy supply, flood-prone areas and environmental infrastructure; and C. Environmental sustainability.

3. **Legalization of Marijuana for Recreational Use** - Following on the heels of the 2010 “Compassionate Use Medical Marijuana Act” which legalized the use of medicinal cannabis for individuals with medical conditions, New Jersey voted for the legalization of recreational marijuana, though it has not been finalized. Current land use regulations do not identify marijuana-related uses, and the Township may wish to establish a general land use policy for medical and recreational marijuana related uses, including the growing, manufacturing, packing, shipping, wholesale and retail sale of products.

4. **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure** - Bill S-606 was signed into law by Governor Murphy on November 6, 2019 intending to encourage municipalities to plan for electric vehicle infrastructure by amending the MLUL to require the inclusion of existing and proposed locations of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure as a component of the land use element of the master plan. The new law also requires that a circulation plan element, an optional element of the master plan, similarly identifies the existing and proposed locations of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure. In addition, a green buildings and environmental plan element, also an optional master plan element, must “consider, encourage and promote the development of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure in locations appropriate for their development...” Similar information is now required a part of the master plan reexamination report and any redevelopment plan. The Township should review these policy requirements accordingly and consider how its various Master Plan components should address this emerging technology.

5. **Vacant and Abandoned Properties** - The New Jersey Land Bank Law ([PL 2019, c.159](#)), signed into law on July 10, 2019, allows municipalities to designate a land bank entity to obtain vacant, abandoned and neglected properties to revitalize and productively reuse properties for the public benefit. Under the New Jersey Land Bank Law, municipalities can designate a non-profit organization or a public entity (redevelopment entities, county improvement authorities, or departments or agencies of the municipality) as the municipal land bank entity. Land bank entities can acquire properties and act as a municipal agent to purchase liens at a tax sale, carry out lien foreclosures, and take individual abandoned properties. In addition, land bank entities must develop and maintain an online, publicly accessible database of land bank properties and the community advisory board must issue an annual report regarding the land bank entity's online database. The Township presently contains a number of properties which may qualify as vacant and/or abandoned and should consider whether or not to address such properties under the provisions of the Land Bank Law.

6. **The State Development and Redevelopment Plan/Draft State Strategic Plan** - The State Planning Commission (SPC) conducted a review of the March 2001 State

Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) and produced New Jersey's "Proposed Final Draft State Development and Redevelopment Plan," which was released on October 11, 2011 as a replacement for the adopted State Plan. This unadopted draft plan, described in detail in 2018, focused on growth and economic development, characterizing "New Jersey's process of planning...and regulating..." as an "outdated approach" that is diminishing the State's quality of life. However, this "State Strategic Plan" was never adopted and the 2001 SDRP remains in force.

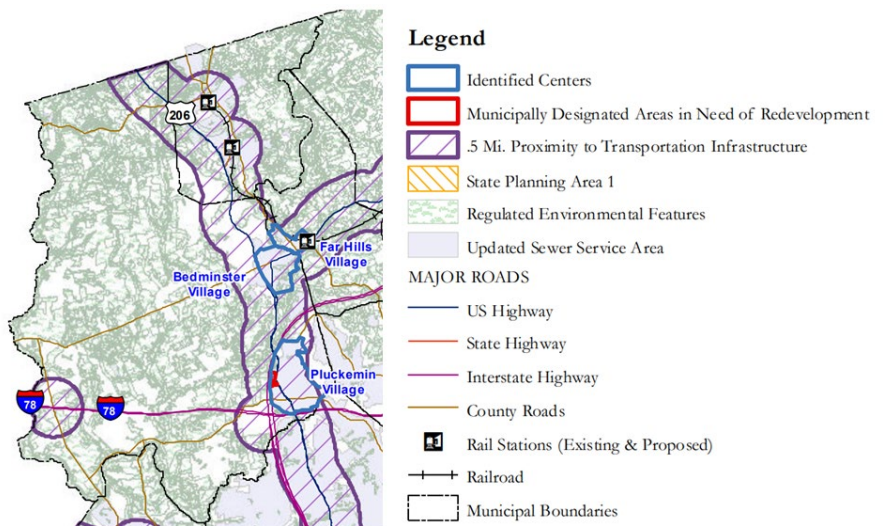
The 2001 State Plan established a process for endorsement of local plans by the State, through 'Plan Endorsement' which begins with a comparison of local plans to the State Plan and concludes with reconciliation of policies and an action plan for all participants. State agencies are directed to assist in advancing the endorsed municipal plans and funding and technical assistance are prioritized to towns with endorsed plans.

Bedminster secured Plan Endorsement from the SPC, including "center" designations for the villages of Pluckemin and Bedminster. In recent months, the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) has reached out to Bedminster to determine whether the Township wishes to retain these designations and outlining actions that must be taken. The process involves completing a municipal self-assessment and negotiating with the OPA regarding an implementation agenda.

7. **Strategic Economic Development Planning** - Somerset County has developed a system for organizing priority investments in economic development and preservation in the County. AT&T has been designated as a Priority Growth Investment Area because it fits certain designation criteria, reflected in the map excerpt at right.

The County Land Use Board also identified Bedminster Village Center and the Pluckemin Town Center as Local Priority Areas.

Somerset County's priority investment framework was recognized by the State Planning Commission. The County has been analyzing highly detailed and sophisticated market data regarding the complexion and occupancy characteristics of land uses throughout the county's priority investment areas and will use this data as part of the County Investment and Asset Mapping Update. Bedminster is currently working with the County and the Highlands Council to study the economic development issues and opportunities in Bedminster's growth corridor area.



Other Areas of Concern

Septic Problem Areas – The 2008 Reexamination noted concerns "about the possible need for expensive septic repairs in the residential subdivisions north of Bedminster Village. With limiting soil conditions and the prevailing density of development (1-acre lots), this area should be considered for inclusion within the sewer service area. Portions of this area of Bedminster drain to the Peapack Brook, a Category One stream, which would benefit from removal of the septic wastewater load. Such an extension should be conditioned upon strict adherence to the current zoning as the maximum permitted development and should not be used to increase development potential". These concerns remain in 2018.

Land Conservation - Bedminster has been aggressively pursuing open space and farmland preservation for decades, and these efforts have created a greenbelt around and between the villages of Bedminster and Pluckemin. With Somerset County and New Jersey as partners, farmland and open space preservation has been pursued with local open space tax dollars, and the County has also purchased significant open space in western Bedminster. The question of whether to continue aggressively purchasing open space has been raised, and the use of open space tax proceeds for maintenance or other purposes has been suggested. This implicates open space planning policies of the Recreation and Open Space Plan.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE LAND USE PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Provide for mixed use development to address the affordable rental unit obligation – Bedminster will satisfy 5 of the 28 required affordable family rental units as part of the mixed retail and apartment project approved by use variance and currently under construction by Elite Properties at Bedminster, LLC. As a result, Bedminster must zone for an additional 23 affordable family rentals through zoning by July 2021.

The Land Use Board has determined that the location for these units should be on the undeveloped portion of the Bedminster One campus, fronting on Burnt Mills Road, where they will be an integral part of the village. Here, the Reexamination calls for a mixed-use retail and apartment development including 160 residential units, of which 24 or 15% of the units would be affordable family rentals, providing a 1-unit cushion. Improvements by the developer to the intersection of Burnt Mills/Washington Valley and Route 202/206 will be required as a condition of such development.

A draft ordinance amending Section 13-4-01 of the Land Development Ordinance to add the Office Research Village Mixed Use District (OR-V-MU) is attached to this Reexamination Report.

Fine-tune Non-residential Zoning – An inventory of all commercial uses should be developed, including type of use and floor area, to afford a better understanding of the complexion of Bedminster's commercial uses. Village planning efforts, which should be aimed at promoting the villages as people places, can benefit from this information as it relates to the current mix of uses and how it could be improved. The Village

Neighborhood zone already permits mixed residential and non-residential uses in both Pluckemin and Bedminster, a benefit for village vitality if utilized.

Expand Policies to Promote Agriculture - Efforts to promote equine agriculture should be expanded. Equestrian interests are seen as a key element of Bedminster's history and culture and promoting equine agriculture will help to assure a continuing agricultural future in Bedminster.

Collaborate for the Future of The Hills - Pluckemin, the once small hamlet of the Revolution, is now the place where most Bedminster residents live. However, built during the heyday of auto-dependent land uses, Bedminster residents at The Hills are not afforded much in the way of pedestrian circulation and the lack of sidewalks makes it less safe and convenient to proceed on foot or bicycle. Street lighting issues due to improper burial of unshielded conduit is another problem and is emblematic of the issues the residents of The Hills will face over the upcoming decades. On-site drainage problems are also a challenge for residents.

Bedminster should examine whether the "on your own" attitude toward homeowner's association responsibilities should remain or whether there are issues that cannot be effectively managed under current conditions. Failure to maintain a desirable community character at The Hills may pose threats to future neighborhood comfort, safety and security.

Sign Standards – Blade signs and other communication tools are increasingly part of the messaging used by businesses, and the range of signage permitted should be reexamined to assure that businesses are able to compete in today's marketplace. At the same time, some types of signs, particularly with changing messages, are of concern in relation to traffic safety and scenic values. A review of signage standards involving local businesses should be undertaken with an eye toward limiting clutter while allowing reasonable sign size and placement.

Lighting – Review and modify current lighting standards to provide for sufficient lighting for safety and security purposes while preventing excessive site lighting.

Remedial Sewer Service Area Expansion – Consideration should be given to revising the Utility Services Plan to expand the sewer service area within the developed sector east of Route 206 north of Bedminster Village.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LAND USE BOARD CONCERNING REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

The Land Use Board has preliminarily reviewed the merits of designation of redevelopment areas in Pluckemin and Bedminster villages and the highway corridor that connects these neighborhoods. These areas include lands and buildings that may be eligible for designation pursuant to the *Local Redevelopment and Housing Law*, P.L. 1992 C. 79 (C40A:12A-1 et seq.).

New Jersey's redevelopment law, which provides strong tools for use by municipalities to remedy deterioration and/or improve the productivity of underproductive lands, offers a variety of benefits through redevelopment planning and design, which permit the municipality to:

- Partner with the private sector through contractual redevelopment agreements, which can include development incentives (e.g.-tax abatement, infrastructure).
- Achieve greater control over development through an adopted redevelopment plan, redevelopment agreement(s) and designation of a redeveloper or redevelopers.
- Qualify for grant and other funding for planning and development activities.
- Refine land use policies and development regulations to promote desired redevelopment.
- Qualify for 1.33:1 bonus credits against the municipal fair share obligation for qualifying low and moderate income housing units constructed within a redevelopment area.

Bedminster designated the DOT site in Pluckemin as an area in need when it appeared that the site would be sold to a developer. However, the sale fell through and no redevelopment plan was ever adopted for the site.

The changing circumstances at AT&T suggest that this site may well qualify as an area in need of redevelopment. Single-use campuses like the AT&T Long Lines site, while appearing tenantable, are increasingly being designated for mixed use redevelopment, as recently occurred at Bridgewater's former Sanofi Research site.

AMENDMENTS AND/OR SUPPLEMENTS TO THIS REEXAMINATION REPORT

The Land Use Board reserves the right to amend and supplement the Master Plan Reexamination Report at future meetings, and the Master Plan Reexamination Report will be posted on the Township website.