

April 2008 Twp. Newsletter's Skillman Village Update

Below are some recent, current and upcoming activity highlights for the Skillman Village project:

Remediation:

- Preparations are being made for continuation of the steam pipe removal work beginning mid-April 2008. This work was postponed last fall while Weston Solutions renegotiated its subcontractor agreements. To recap, the pipe removal work started March '07 and continued all spring and summer on-site, during and after Village School's session. A similar scenario, which includes Weston's commitment that no work will be done in the so called "spaghetti area" east of the school when school is in session, will commence this spring. As of press time, the Community Advisory Board is scheduled to meet on April 1st to hear a presentation from Weston Solutions describing the plan details.

Redevelopment Planning:

The Skillman Village Redevelopment Plan – What's It All About?

A Redevelopment Plan is required by law in the redevelopment process. The plan defines the 'up to' limit for types of land use and allowable square footage of each type of use.

The overriding goal is to devise a Redevelopment Plan that can evolve over time, while remaining true to core goals and values. The Plan will provide flexibility and encourage input and innovation from potential redevelopers.

In addition to explaining constraints and addressing the question of density and intensity of land uses, the plan outlines the Township's goals for the site. These include: high value, character as a community gathering place, respect for its unique history, high standards for site design and architecture, and environmental innovation.

What has shaped the Redevelopment Plan?

- Smart Growth planning principles and Township's 14 Guiding Principles
- Community Input, including concept planning Team's 2005 Vision Plan, community survey results, stakeholder listening sessions (schools, neighbors, nearby businesses), and Steering Committee feedback
- Further Review: Last month feedback from the public and various volunteer committees' feedback were gathered at meetings before Township Committee, Steering Committee and Planning Board.
- Economic & fiscal analyses, including market analysis and revenue forecasts
- Traffic analysis of all nearby roadways
- Environmental features and constraints
- Engaged Economic Research Associates (ERA) to assist with economic analysis and planning. They identified supportable land uses, risk/rewards and trade-offs, tested viability of various scenarios and weighed fiscal benefits vs. impacts.
- The Township performed a "Market Study", "Feasibility Study" and "Impact Analysis" for each of the scenarios identified in the 2005 plan.

- “Hot Issues” identified include traffic, school aged children, tax impact, density, integrated use and sustainability

How the Plan Has Evolved: 2005 Plan vs. 2008 Redevelopment Plan

Today, the land area being considered for redevelopment is more compact: Approx. 70 acres of 256 acre total. The Township is reserving additional land on the eastern side of property for possible future use. There is greater focus on integrated uses. The question of density is addressed through the use of “up to” limits for residential units and non-residential square footage to make clear what density may be permitted. The plan includes recommended height limits (average two or three stories, with no building higher than five stories) and bulk requirements.

Next Steps

As we go to press, the redevelopment plan is undergoing further review. Public interviews with six potential developers will be held on April 3, 4 and 5th. For times and location, see Skillman Village Meetings page of website at www.montgomery.nj.us/about/npdcmeetings.asp. It is only after a developer is selected that a formal document known as a Developer’s Agreement will be negotiated and adopted and the chosen party will go about the task of creating a Site Plan. A final planning step, likely a year or more away, is Site Plan review before the Planning Board.