Township of Harding
Morris County, New Jersey

New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan: Implementation Program and Policies

As amended by Ordinance # 18-03
November 19, 2003

Prepared under the direction of the Harding Township Committee by:

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New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan: Implementation Program and Policies

Introduction

This document supplements the New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan adopted by the Harding Township Committee on May 7, 2003 to guide revitalization efforts within the core of New Vernon Village. The redevelopment plan identified sites for a new Post Office and Library and the need for public safety improvements including fire safety, pedestrian circulation, parking, traffic calming, and wastewater disposal. The plan's revitalization objectives are guided by the overall principles of preserving the character of the village, encouraging historic preservation, and maintaining a balance between residential and commercial land uses. The township's overall purpose is to encourage private revitalization in the heart of the village through strategic planning and actions guided by the township.

Upon adoption of the redevelopment plan, the Township Committee established a Redevelopment Steering Committee to follow up on the recommendations contained in the plan. The Steering Committee, comprised of two Township Committee members, a Planning Board member and two residents, met on numerous occasions to discuss issues raised in the redevelopment plan. Several subcommittees, comprised of Steering Committee members and additional residents, were formed to identify options and solutions to the various issues raised in the plan (see the matrix on the last page for a list of the subcommittee members). In addition, those interested in redeveloping properties within the redevelopment area were consulted. This document addresses each of the components and recommendations contained in the redevelopment plan, and builds upon the plan's objectives.

The Redevelopment Area

The designated New Vernon Redevelopment Area includes 13 lots comprising 10.25 acres situated on the east and west sides of Village Road in the heart of New Vernon Village. All of the lots are improved with structures and other site improvements and reflect a mix of land uses including residential, retail food sales, professional offices, banking and real estate establishments. In addition, one commercial property is the site of a former gasoline station and motor vehicle repair business.

Twelve of the lots in the redevelopment area are privately owned; the Tunis-Ellicks House/DPW facilities comprise the 13th lot, which is owned by the township. The designated area incorporates the entire B-1 zoning district and, with the exception of a portion of the township-owned lot, all of the designated area is within the state and nationally registered New Vernon Historic District.

The Redevelopment Plan

Following is a summary of the redevelopment plan and the strategies recommended to implement the plan's objectives.

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN COMPONENT	REDEVELOPMENT PLAN STRATEGY
Post Office	The plan identified two potential sites for a new Post Office within the redevelopment area: Block 17 Lot 61 and Lot 58.
Library	The plan established a site for a new library on the township land.
Land uses	--Residential: the plan identified goals and objectives to maintain a variety of residential uses in the village. --Nonresidential: the plan identified currently permitted and proposed nonresidential land uses.
Public safety improvements and circulation	The plan identified the need and location(s) for: pedestrian pathways, village parking, a cistern for fire fighting, and traffic calming and control.
Wastewater management	The plan recommended a study of wastewater management solutions that will encourage redevelopment.
Historic preservation	The plan supported the preservation of historic resources and provided a development incentive to encourage the retention of historic structures.
Redevelopment Area design guidelines	The plan established general design objectives for the redevelopment area and recommended the development of design guidelines.

Incentives for Private Redevelopment: The township anticipates that most of the activities planned for the redevelopment area will be undertaken by private enterprise. The township is providing the following important incentives as an inducement to encourage private redevelopment activities:

1. New residential and nonresidential uses will be permitted in the B-1 Zone district. Sites for a new Post Office and Library have been identified.
2. The limit on floor area ratio will be increased as an incentive for historic preservation.
3. The township will construct a shared parking lot to avert the need for large individual on-site parking lots.
4. On-site parking requirements will be reduced in recognition of the compact, pedestrian-oriented nature of New Vernon Village.
5. Pedestrian pathways and traffic calming techniques are being planned to reinforce the pedestrian nature of the village and enhance public safety.

The redevelopment plan and this supplemental document establish the township's redevelopment policies, which are intended to fulfill the planning objectives of the plan. Concept plans for the redevelopment of the "Coach Works" site, the "Academy" and the "Cooke" property have been prepared by private parties interested in redevelopment activities. The Steering Committee will meet with all developers seeking to redevelop properties within the redevelopment area and will issue an advisory report to the Planning Board concerning each proposal. All development proposals will be subject to the normal site plan approval process when they are sufficiently complete to proceed.

The Post Office

From a land use planning standpoint, the former "Coach Works" ("Ortman's Garage") site remains the best site in the redevelopment area for a new Post Office because of its size and central location in the village. In this central location, on-site parking and pedestrian access can be linked with the proposed site for the Library. With the provision of crosswalks and pedestrian pathways along Village Road, linkage can be provided among all of the village's businesses and residential uses. A private developer has prepared a concept plan showing how this site might be developed for a mixed-use project including a Post Office.

The Library

A portion of the township's land (Block 17 Lot 1) can be leased to the Harding Library Association for the construction of a new Library. A portion of this lot just west of the Tunis-Ellicks House and behind the Coach Works site (Lot 61.01) is of sufficient size to permit the construction of an approximately 5,000 square foot building (about 2,500 square feet in each of two stories). The Harding Library Association is responsible for developing, constructing and maintaining the new facility.

If this site is chosen for the Library, it will be necessary to shift a portion of the existing access driveway that serves the Tunis-Ellicks House and leads to the DPW/Recycling portion of the lot, but this is not a major obstacle to the project. Realigning the driveway may also permit an area to be developed for a supplemental parking lot to serve the village and Library (see "Village Parking" in the Public Safety Improvements section below). In assessing the impacts that these improvements may have on the Tunis-Ellicks site, the Township Committee will also consider whether the property on which the Municipal Building is located would be an appropriate alternative site for the Library.

Land Uses

Residential Land Uses: One of the most important features of a village is the mixed-use nature of its land uses. An important objective of the redevelopment plan is the continuation of residential uses in the village core so as to maintain a balance between residential and nonresidential uses. To meet this objective the plan recommended the strategies listed below. Beneath each item is a statement indicating how each strategy is being addressed in this redevelopment plan supplement.

1. *Investigate ways to ensure that residential uses will remain in the redevelopment area, including the possibility of purchasing development rights, and consider the realignment of zoning boundaries.*

   The possibility of rezoning some properties presently used as single-family residences from B-1 to a residential designation (which would have precluded their conversion to a business use) will not be pursued. Instead, the township considers the possible purchase of business development rights to be an appropriate method of ensuring that existing single-family residences remain in the redevelopment area. An investigation of this approach will be actively pursued by the township.

2. *Amend the zoning to permit rental apartments, allow mixed commercial/residential uses, and permit homeowners to board up to two persons in their homes.*

   The B-1 zone provisions of the Land Use and Development Ordinance will be amended to broaden the permitted uses to allow mixed uses, apartments and boarding.

3. *Consider strategies that would encourage low-cost or affordable housing within the redevelopment area, including shared housing for senior citizens.*

   To promote mixed commercial/residential uses within the village, the township will only allow the second floor of a commercial building to be used for one or more residence(s). However, as a special incentive for the creation of affordable housing units[1] the township will permit the second floor to be used for offices (but not retail or other nonresidential uses) if at least one residence anywhere on the property is rented as an affordable housing unit which qualifies as such under state rules. Property owners will benefit from rental income, the viability of the village as a mixed-use area will be enhanced, and incentives will be provided to help meet affordable housing objectives.

Nonresidential Land Uses: The B-1 zone is a "neighborhood" commercial district. Nonresidential uses should be pedestrian friendly and of a scale and intensity that will be compatible with existing residences and historic structures. The B-1 ordinance amendment mentioned above will include provisions for new business uses (in addition to those already permitted) consistent with the redevelopment plan's recommendations as follows:

ADDITIONAL NONRESIDENTIAL USES TO BE PERMITTED: B-1 ZONE
A Post Office
Professional offices for: Financial Planners Landscape Architects
A senior citizens facility
Retail sales and services limited to: Hairdresser/barber Seamstress/tailor Florists Interior decorators Art dealers/art galleries/antiques
Delicatessens and coffee shops with seating limited to 30 seats

Off-street Parking for Nonresidential Uses: Establishing off-street parking standards for nonresidential uses in New Vernon must balance the development objectives of property owners with the community objective of protecting the historic character of the village while promoting its viability. In addition, parking standards for the village should take into account that the parking needs for commercial development in a compact village settlement are different than

[1] An affordable housing unit is one that is rented or sold for an amount that is affordable to *low income* households, with income not in excess of 50% of the regional median income, adjusted for household size, or *moderate income*, with income not in excess of 80% of the regional median income, adjusted for household size.

those of typical of suburban highway areas or densely developed cities served by public transportation.

Typical suburban parking standards for individual businesses are based on an assumption that the parking area will serve a "stand alone" business that has been developed on a site that has no physical linkage to, or may be far away from, other businesses (i.e. "suburban sprawl"). In a pedestrian-oriented compact village setting where businesses are within walking distance of one another, it can and should be anticipated that parking usage will often overlap, meaning that one vehicle trip may serve multipurpose activities, such as a visit to the Post Office as well as the deli. Moreover, peak business hours (and therefore, parking needs) vary for retail, office and service uses.

Planning policies and standards for off-street parking should recognize these patterns and acknowledge the limited size and compact scale of New Vernon Village, so as to avoid the construction of large individual parking lots on every site. Indeed, constructing too much parking on each and every lot would fundamentally change the character of the village and its historic setting could be lost. For these reasons, the following policies are to be applied as part of the redevelopment plan for New Vernon Village:

1. Shared parking arrangements among businesses are strongly encouraged.
2. Off-street parking should not be placed in the front yard of any business use.
3. The township will provide a supplemental parking area on township land in the village, so as to minimize the need for on-site parking lots.
4. All uses within the village should have access to the supplemental parking area to be constructed by the township (see "Village Parking" in the next section).
5. On-site parking should be provided at the following rates for nonresidential uses:[2]
    a. Office (including medical/dental): 2.2 spaces per 1000 s.f.[3] of floor area.
    b. Retail/service: 2.0 spaces per 1000 s.f. of floor area.
    c. Bank: 3.0 spaces per 1000 s.f. of floor area.
    d. Post Office: 3.0 spaces per 1000 s.f. of floor area.
    e. Deli/coffee shop: 3.0 spaces per 1000 s.f. of floor area.[4]

Public Safety Improvements and Circulation

Pedestrian pathways, improved circulation, and traffic calming are all needed as part of the redevelopment plan in order to retain and enhance the pedestrian oriented nature and scale of New Vernon Village. In addition, fire safety improvements are needed in order to enhance fire-fighting capabilities in the village. The objectives concerning each of these improvements are described in the redevelopment plan. The township will prepare a concept plan for redevelopment area improvements, to depict specific locations and details for improvements, based on the following parameters.

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[2] Source: Parking Handbook for Small Communities; John Edwards; 1994. NOTE that these are minimum standards only, and are not intended as an absolute limitation.

[3] s.f. equals square feet.

[4] This exceeds the 2.2 spaces per 1000 s.f. recommended in the Parking Handbook for Small Communities (John Edwards, 1994).

Pedestrian Pathways: A fundamental objective of the redevelopment plan is to maintain the pedestrian scale and orientation of the village. At present, a limited pathway exists along the easterly side of Village Road in front of the Deli and Weichert Real Estate office (composed of asphalt pavement) and the Ward Real Estate office (composed of brick). In order to retain the pedestrian-friendly character of the village and to make viable the use of a supplemental parking area, pedestrian pathways should be constructed within the redevelopment area in the following locations:

1. Along both sides of Village Road.
2. From the Coach Works site to the township's supplemental parking area.
3. Crosswalks at each roadway intersection and at points along Village Road near the Coach Works site and near the Academy (Block 18 Lot 3).
4. In the future, access via a pathway from either Lot 5 or 6 in Block 18 (behind Chase or Peapack-Gladstone Bank) could lead down to Millbrook Road, if a crosswalk and pathway are provided along Millbrook Road.

Village Parking: The township will construct a parking area to serve the village on the township lot (Block 18 Lot 1) in an area behind the Coach Works site. This area is adjacent to the location to be reserved for the Library. Approximately 25-30 cars will be accommodated, which will provide parking opportunities for all businesses in the village. In addition, the township will continue to permit on-street parallel parking on Village Road near Millbrook, to provide easy-access short-term parking.

Fire Safety Cistern: The township will construct a 40,000 gallon cistern on the township lot, in a location to be determined as part of the development of the above-mentioned plan for redevelopment area improvements.

Traffic Calming: The village's pedestrian orientation and public safety can be thwarted by increased traffic volumes and motor vehicle speed. The township will undertake traffic calming initiatives including, but not limited to, the installation of crosswalks (utilizing a visible material to alert motorists to pedestrian crossings), a lowering of the speed limits on Village Road, and improvements to the configuration of the roadway to accommodate a more formal arrangement for on-street parking.

Wastewater Management and Potable Water

All of the lots in the redevelopment area are served by private wells and wastewater systems. Despite the preponderance of small lot sizes, existing wastewater disposal systems appear to be functioning, although none is designed in compliance with current wastewater management standards.

The costs associated with developing and maintaining a small public wastewater disposal system would be prohibitive, and establishing a larger, more cost-effective system would be contrary to state and local planning objectives for environmentally sensitive areas like Harding. However, the township will support private initiatives that lead to innovative wastewater solutions, including environmentally safe, shared systems that serve more than one use or property.

With regard to potable water supplies, the township will also support private agreements for shared wells if determined to be necessary to provide safe drinking water for properties in the redevelopment area.

Historic Preservation and Design Guidelines

Zoning Incentive for Historic Preservation: The B-1 ordinance amendment mentioned earlier will permit an increase in the floor area ratio (FAR) limit from the present 15%, to 20% when redevelopment involves the retention of a historic structure while maintaining its historic integrity.

Design Guidelines: The township has retained an architect specializing in historic preservation to provide detailed guidelines for restoration and redevelopment within the redevelopment area. The guidelines will focus on important architectural elements and how historic structures can be retained in their setting. In addition, they will illustrate how new construction can be designed in a manner compatible with existing structures and the historic character of the New Vernon Historic District.

This document was adopted by Amended Ordinance 18-03
Introduced: November 19, 2003
Final Passage: December 17, 2003
NVRP Implementation Plan.doc

REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEES

PLAN COMPONENT (SUBCOMMITTEE)	SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS
Post Office	John Murray Fran Frigerio
Library	Lou Lanzerotti (Chair) Kim Zitvay Penny Hinkle
Commercial Land Uses	Steering Committee John Lasser
Residential Land Uses 1. Encourage residential uses 2. Affordable housing	Sally Dudley (Chair) Isobel Olcott Candace Weeks
Public safety improvements and circulation 1. Pedestrian pathways 2. Village parking 3. Fire safety cistern 4. Traffic control	David Dietz (Chair) Lou Lanzerotti Jim Halsey Ann Granbery Dick Walter Justine Kovacs
Wastewater and stormwater management	Chris/Allyn Garry Annibal
Historic preservation and design guidelines	Mary Prendergast (Chair) Maureen Soter Ann Granbery Bruce Wild

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS: John Murray, Lou Lanzerotti, Sally Dudley, Jim Halsey, Roy Christensen.
PROFESSIONALS/STAFF: Roger Clapp, Esq., Susan C. Kimball, PP, Richard Wiedmann, Linda Peralta.

HARDING TOWNSHIP RESOLUTION

After the public hearing on Ordinance No. 18-03 and thorough discussion thereof, the following resolution was introduced and unanimously adopted on roll call vote:

RESOLVED, that Ordinance No. 18-03 entitled:

" AMENDED ORDINANCE TO ADOPT A SUPPLEMENT TO THE NEW VERNON VILLAGE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF HARDING"

which was introduced on first reading on September 3, 2003 and published in the "Observer Tribune" on September 11, 2003, amended November 19, 2003 and published in the "Observer Tribune" on November 27, 2003 be and said Ordinance is finally passed and adopted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Clerk be and he hereby is authorized and directed to publish in "The Observer Tribune" a notice that said Ordinance No. 18-03 was finally passed and adopted on December 17, 2003.

DATED: December 17, 2003

ATTEST:

Richard C. Wiedmann,
Township Clerk

TOWNSHIP OF HARDING

BY _____
John R. Murray,
Chair

Vote on Resolution:

	FOR APPROVAL	AGAINST APPROVAL	ABSTAIN
Mr. Dinsmore	1st Y		
Mrs. Farrell	Y		
Mr. Lanzerotti	Y		
Mrs. Prendergast	Y		
Mr. Murray	Y		

HARDING TOWNSHIP
AMENDED ORDINANCE 18-03

AMENDED ORDINANCE TO ADOPT A SUPPLEMENT TO THE NEW VERNON VILLAGE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF HARDING

WHEREAS, by Resolution adopted on February 5, 2003, the Harding Township Committee found that Lots 1, 57, 58, 60, 61, 61.01 and 61.02 in Block 17 and Lots 3, 3.01, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in Block 18 on the Harding Township Tax Maps (the "Redevelopment Area") is an area in need of redevelopment pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq. (the "Redevelopment Law"); and

WHEREAS, on May 7, 2003 the Harding Township Committee enacted Ordinance #6-03 adopting a plan entitled "New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan" (the "Redevelopment Plan") to establish policies and strategies for redevelopment within the designated redevelopment area; and

WHEREAS, at the request of the Harding Township Committee, Susan C. Kimball, PP, of Kimball & Kimball, Professional Planners, has prepared a supplement to the Redevelopment Plan entitled "New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan: Implementation Programs and Policies" (the "Implementation Plan"); and

WHEREAS, the Harding Township Committee has determined that together, the Redevelopment Plan and Implementation Plan provide a suitable plan for the revitalization and redevelopment of the Redevelopment Area pursuant to the Redevelopment Law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HARDING, IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY, as follows:

Section 1. The "New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan: Implementation Program and Policies" prepared by Susan C. Kimball, PP, dated November 19, 2003 is hereby adopted as a supplement to the Redevelopment Plan for the Redevelopment Area.

Section 2. The Harding Township Committee shall continue to act as a redevelopment agency and is hereby authorized to use all the powers and authority granted pursuant to the Redevelopment Law to undertake the New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan.

Section 3. A copy of this Ordinance and the "New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan: Implementation Programs and Policies" shall be forwarded to the Harding Township Planning Board for their report concerning the Implementation Plan and its consistency or inconsistency with the Master Plan of the Township of Harding.

Section 4. This Ordinance shall not take effect until the Harding Township Committee has reviewed the Harding Township Planning Board's report on the Redevelopment Plan or as otherwise provided by N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7(e).

ATTEST:

TOWNSHIP OF HARDING,
IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS

Richard C. Wiedmann
Township Clerk

John R. Murray, III
Chair

Introduced: September 3, 2003
Amended: November 19, 2003
Adopted: December 17, 2003