

## Meeting Summary: American Legion Drive Redevelopment

### Community Workshop - November 20, 2023

On November 20, 2023, the Township of Teaneck held a workshop to seek community input on the potential redevelopment project for the American Legion Drive/Beverly Road area. The potential project was conceptually depicted in a presentation to the community by Crossroads Companies on July 27, 2023 (“concept plan”). The purpose of the November 20, 2023 meeting was to gather feedback on the concept plan from the community that could be shared with Crossroads Companies. Approximately 100 Teaneck residents attended the meeting. The meeting was organized into three topical discussions regarding land uses, design/massing and community benefits. The following summarizes the feedback and comments from the community.

#### Land Uses

The land use discussion asked whether the concept plan, which showed multifamily residential, supermarket, retail and parking uses, provided an appropriate mix of uses or if the community felt there were alternative uses that should be considered for the redevelopment project.

#### General

- Cedar Lane is struggling; the Township’s focus should be on promoting mixed-use development along Cedar Lane before it pursues a redevelopment project in this area.
- The Township should not pursue this project until the Master Plan process is completed.
- There are concerns about flood risk within the Beverly Road area.
- Planning and developing the site in an incremental manner is preferred, so the community can learn and make adjustments based on each phase of the project.
- Many residents expressed concerns about traffic – especially in the southerly area of American Legion Drive (near ALD South).
- Several attendees noted that the community wants to see more open space and less development within the area.

#### Housing

- Low- to mid-rise housing is desired as “Teaneck is a community of single-family homes.”
- The community is generally open to and supportive of senior housing. The bus access would be valuable to the senior population.
- While there is a need for new housing, many believed the market is saturated with new luxury apartments.
- Many residents felt that there is a need for workforce housing in Teaneck and that required low/mod income housing does not address the affordability issues experienced by many households.
- Within the redevelopment area, the ALD South site is most appropriate for multifamily housing.
- Several attendees indicated that townhouses would be the best residential use for the Beverly Road area.

- A few residents noted that there is a need for small studio/1 bedroom housing options in Teaneck.

#### Commercial/retail

- Attendees seemed to agree that the redevelopment area is not a optimal location for retail (aside from Stop & Shop).
- The ground floor of ALD North (along American Legion Drive) could be appropriate for "small business space."
- Retail along Garrison Ave should be explored, especially if it could help screen the parking garage.

#### Parking

- All "public" parking spaces should be free (i.e., no parking fees).
- Many community members felt there was no evidence of a need for additional public parking.
- The parking garage along Beverly Road is overbuilt.

### **Community Benefits**

The concept of "public benefits" or "public amenities" was explained to the group. In the context of the Redevelopment process, a municipality may negotiate directly with a redeveloper for specific onsite or offsite improvements that can benefit the project or the larger community. Feedback was sought on suggestions for an amenity that would benefit the Cedar Lane commercial corridor. As an example of a public amenity in the redevelopment context, pictures and maps of the downtown redevelopment of Metuchen were presented. The recent redevelopment project in Metuchen, including approximately 350 apartments, 600 space garage and retail, provided a public plaza to Metuchen. The Metuchen Downtown Alliance frequently programs events on the plaza that attracts visitors to the downtown. This new activity has created additional demand for shopping and dining on the Main Street corridor and has boosted the Main Street commercial spaces. Rents have increased and vacancy has dropped with new stores and restaurants opening. This project and the plaza amenity was presented as an example of a successful downtown project with similar basic components to the proposed American Legion Drive redevelopment.

#### General Comments

- General opposition to any redevelopment of American Legion Drive or Beverly/Garrison.
- Consensus that the Cedar Lane commercial district suffers from a lack of investment.
- It is pre-mature to evaluate any project benefits until the entire Crossroads project is understood.
- It is pre-mature to discuss redevelopment of Cedar Lane until the Master Plan is adopted.
- Specific comments on possible project amenities included:
  - o Improved space for farmer's market.

- Larger public space that is properly maintained.
- Cedar Lane requires a traffic study.
- Upgraded bike lanes to Cedar Lane and bike facilities.
- Financial incentives for storefront rehabilitation.
- Open/areas and parks.
- Art exhibition and gallery spaces for Teaneck resident artists.
- Rain gardens.

### **Design/Massing**

The design group was focused on discussing design elements of the proposed development. More specifically, landscaping around the development, setbacks, building step backs, massing, building materials, window design, parking garage façade, etc.

#### General Comments

- 'We don't want apartment buildings taking away our open space and municipal lots.'
- Most of them did not support any kind of development on any of the lots.
- Most people were of the opinion that high density multifamily apartments would bring in more people, more cars leading to traffic congestion on Cedar Lane, American Legion Drive, and other roads. According to them, these routes are already prone to accidents. Pedestrian safety was also a frequently mentioned concern.
- 'It is a single-family residential area. The proposed development will obstruct sunlight, air, and views further down Beverly Road and Cedar Lane. It will cast a lot of shadows. It will be an eyesore for the neighborhood.'
- 'Anything above 2 to 3 stories is unacceptable.' 3 stories development was seen as the most agreeable outcome. A few members of the community were comfortable with higher density in the southeastern corner of the site-adjacent to the railroad. (ALD South)
- Most preferred townhomes instead of multifamily development.
- Unaffordable designs - 'The proposed multifamily apartments and the parking garage are going to be very expensive. Create more affordable homes. The parking garage will require payment to park.'
- 'There is a school and a church behind Stop & Shop. The area should maintain low density development.'
- 'The problem is not design, it's density. Community wants to maintain neighborhood-scale development.'
- Many asked about the Master Plan and whether this development would be consistent with the Master Plan.
- There should be setbacks on the ground floor with landscaping and greenery to provide privacy to ground floor residential units. Do not want buildings right up against the street. Sidewalks should also be wide enough to accommodate people walking in both directions.
- Appropriate buffers and screening will be needed between all higher density and lower density development.

- Grade changes are a concern due to stormwater runoff and collection of stormwater in lower areas of the site. Drainage across the site is an issue, there is a need for more greenery overall to reduce impervious area. Landscaping techniques such as rain gardens and bioswales should be implemented.

#### Specific Comments on Beverly Road

- Zero stories; the design of the multilevel parking garage is not good.
- What about the 4 single family homes stuck in the middle?
- What happens to the farmers' market?
- Instead of the Beverly Road development, densify Cedar Lane.
- 2 to 3 story townhouse design including basement/surface level parking is fine but no parking garage. No need for 655 parking spaces.
- Setbacks should be similar to the existing Garden Apartments at 490 Beverly Road. There should be lawn space/greenery fronting the street.
- Will need appropriate screening and buffering from adjacent lower density development. Rear step backs need to be implemented to mitigate sunlight and shadow concerns.

#### Specific Comments on ALD South

- Comfortable with 3 stories multifamily apartment. (Similar to Image 4 and 8)
- Of all the lots, this is the only area that could be potentially developed.
- Next to railroad, what about noise?
- Some people are comfortable with higher density -4 to 5 stories.
- Setbacks can be minimal here due to not much surrounding activity.

#### Specific Comments on ALD North

- Not more than 3 stories.
- Okay with Tudor style architecture design along with lots of greenery
- Will need appropriate screening and buffering from adjacent lower density development. Rear step backs need to be implemented to mitigate sunlight and shadow concerns.

#### Specific Comments on Parking Garage

- Community members don't want a multi-story parking garage.
- If it is to be built- they are most comfortable with vegetation and dense landscaping along the facades similar to examples 2 and 5 from the illustrative parking garage screens.
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#### Visual Preference Survey: Multifamily Apartment Design (MF)

Groups were asked to approach the board and paste color coded stickers indicating their approval or disapproval of the design image templates.

MF Photo #1:



Photo Source: 44 Park St Apts. , Bloomfield

●	3 votes
●	5 votes
●	13 votes

MF Photo #2:



Photo Source: 45 Market , Morristown

●	1 vote
●	1 vote
●	19 votes

MF Photo #3:



Photo Source: 202 Park Front, Cherry Hill

●	3 votes
●	2 votes
●	10 votes

MF Photo #4:



Photo Source: 490 Beverly Road, Teaneck

●	10 votes
●	5 votes
●	4 votes



MF Photo #5:



Photo Source: Avalon, Teaneck

●	1 vote
●	1 vote
●	16 votes

MF Photo #6:



Photo Source: One William, Englewood

●	0 vote
●	1 vote
●	16 votes

MF Photo #7:



Photo Source: Rendering of Pelham House, New York

●	2 votes
●	1 vote
●	12 votes

MF Photo #8:



Photo Source: *The Dayton, Ridgewood*

●	9 votes
●	2 votes
●	11 votes

MF Photo #9:



Photo Source: The Hazel, Jersey City

●	0 vote
●	1 vote
●	18 votes

MF Photo #10:



Photo Source: Vermella, Union

●	0 vote
●	1 vote
●	12 votes

MF Photo #11:



Photo Source: Vermella, Waldwick

●	6 votes
●	7 votes
●	9 votes

# Teaneck Master Plan Workshop

## Multifamily Development

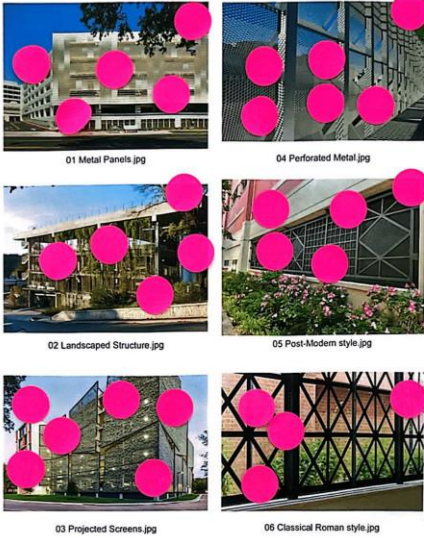
DO NOT APPROVE  
APPROVE  
NEUTRAL



Photo Source: Visual Preference Survey Exercise from the meeting dt. 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2023



Illustrative Examples of Parking Garage Screens

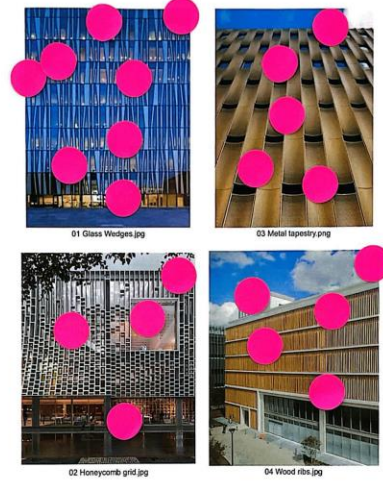


Lakewood Plaza Redevelopment Plan | Township of Montclair, NJ  
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120

Scanned with CamScanner

Illustrative Examples of Parking Garage Screens



Lakewood Plaza Redevelopment Plan | Township of Montclair, NJ  
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Photo Source: Parking Garage Design, Visual Preference Survey Exercise from the meeting dt. 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2023