



Press Release

Verona's Township Council Backs Bloomfield Ave Corridor Rehabilitation

Verona, NJ
May 7, 2024

In a majority vote during Monday's Township Council meeting (5.6.24), the administration was given the green light to proceed with designating Verona's Bloomfield Avenue Corridor as an area in need of Rehabilitation. Prior to the Township Council's decision, Verona's Planning Board had conducted a review and recommended moving forward. This designation creates avenues for accessing funding and rehabilitation programs aimed at revitalizing the area and fostering reinvestment.

But what exactly does rehabilitation planning entail? The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) grants New Jersey municipalities the authority to identify areas in need of rehabilitation or redevelopment based on specific statutory criteria (see below). The LRHL also outlines the process for formulating and executing redevelopment plans for these designated areas. Rehabilitation involves extensive repairs, reconstructions, or renovations of existing structures, with or without new construction or expansions, in areas identified as requiring rehabilitation or redevelopment. This aims to address substandard housing conditions and halt the decay of the area.

Criteria for rehabilitation planning:

- A significant portion of structures in the area being in deteriorated or substandard condition.
- Over half of the housing stock in the outlined area being at least 50 years old.
- Evident patterns of property vacancy, abandonment, or underutilization in the area.
- Persistent property tax payment arrears in the area.
- Environmental contamination hindering property improvements and investments in the area.
- The majority of water and sewer infrastructure in the delineated area being at least 50 years old and requiring repair or significant maintenance.
- For further details on the potential opportunities this classification could unlock for the downtown Verona Bloomfield Avenue area, please refer to the complete memo.
- The Bloomfield Avenue rehabilitation study area, with over half of the housing stock and majority of the sewer and water infrastructure over 50 years old, meets two of the above-referenced rehabilitation criteria.

The rehabilitation designation enables the governing body to utilize the powers contained within the Five-Year Tax Exemption and Abatement Law such as granting exemptions and abatements, which in turn may encourage property owners to rehabilitate and reinvest in their properties. The governing body can further direct the planning board to conduct investigations to determine whether specific properties within the rehabilitation area meet the redevelopment criteria. In the coming months, the Township Planner will be working with the Township to assess the various rehabilitation and redevelopment tools that can be employed to revitalize the Bloomfield Avenue corridor along with zoning ordinance changes recommended in the Master Plan.

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