

BOROUGH OF BELLMAWR
Camden County, New Jersey



2021 Master Plan Reexamination

A blue ink signature of the initials "SMB".

Steven M. Bach, PE, RA, PP, CME

A blue ink signature of the name "Candace A. Kanapluie".

Candace A. Kanapluie, AICP, PP

The original of this document was signed and sealed in accordance with NJAC 13:41-1.3.b

BA **BACH Associates, PC**
ENGINEERS • ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS

304 White Horse Pike, Haddon Heights, NJ 08035
(856) 546-8611 • Fax (856) 546-8612

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I. Introduction and Planning Background

Master Plan Reexamination

This Master Plan Reexamination is being prepared in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 (Municipal Land Use Law). The Borough Council must provide for the reexamination of the Borough's Master Plan and development regulations by the Planning Board at least once every ten years. In 1977 the Borough's Master Plan was completed. In 1996 a Master Plan Reexamination and Housing Element were adopted. In 2002 and 2004, several iterations of a Housing Element were prepared and revised. In 2006 and 2010 Master Plan Reexaminations were prepared and adopted. In 2010, a Circulation Element and a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan were adopted. The most recent reexamination of the Master Plan was adopted in 2010, with a specific purpose of evaluating split zoned parcels within the Borough. Additional Planning documents were adopted as follows:

- April 2005 Municipal Stormwater Management Plan
- January 2006, (Revised February 2008) Route 42/Landfill Redevelopment Study Area and Redevelopment Plan since replaced by the May 2014 Amended Bellmawr Redevelopment Plan

In regards to affordable housing, at the time of the 2010 reexamination the Council of Affordable Housing (COAH) growth share methodology was still in effect, but was revised due to invalidated methods by the Court. The Borough had revised their Housing Element and Fair Share Plan to reflect this and sought compliance. Since then, the growth share methodology along with COAH has been completely dismantled and affordable housing is being handled through the Court system. Currently, the Borough has a present need (rehabilitation) of 36 units, a prior round need of 107 units and a prospective need of zero (0) units. Due to lack of development pressures, the Borough opted not to participate in the current Court administered process.

A Master Plan is intended to guide the use of lands within the Borough in a manner that protects public health and safety, promotes the general welfare, and advances the Borough's goals and objectives. While a Master Plan is required as a prerequisite to the adoption of zoning ordinances, it is also an opportunity for the Borough to proactively plan for and shape its future. Land use policy is integral to many local issues and decisions, and the Master Plan provides the backbone for land use strategies and policies. The Master Plan serves to bring together otherwise divergent plans and programs and to communicate the Borough's goals and objectives to the public, landowners, and other levels of government. The facts, analysis, rationale, priorities, and recommendations in the Master Plan may provide support for the Borough's policy decisions and can unify interests and ideas that often seem to compete with one another. The Master Plan should be used as a structured, but flexible tool built around the Borough's planning philosophy, and utilized to support and promote the Borough's goals and objectives related to the physical, economic and social development of the Borough.

The purpose of a Master Plan Reexamination is to assess how the assumptions, policies and objectives that form the basis for the Master Plan and development regulations have changed since the last Plan or Reexamination and to determine whether any specific changes to the Master Plan or development regulations are recommended, including underlying objectives, policies and standards. This Master Plan Reexamination is being undertaken as a general reexamination of the Master Plan, to consider changing conditions and specific concerns that have arisen, and to address them in the context of a comprehensive land use strategy.

The Master Plan is a policy guide that should be as specific as possible with regard to the Borough's overall goals and the steps needed to implement the Borough's overall vision, while also maintaining an awareness that the social, economic and policy environments are dynamic and may change over the ten year planning horizon. The Master Plan lays the foundation to support land use decisions and upon which the recommendations and plans can be incrementally implemented to realize the Borough's goals and objectives. An up-to-date Master Plan presents a clear explanation of the Borough's land use intentions and planning proposals. The plan can communicate the reasoning for the Borough's expectations and requirements, thereby adding efficiency to the planning and permitting processes.

The Borough of Bellmawr is working to balance its interests in protecting and enhancing existing residential neighborhoods, facilitating opportunities for revitalization and redevelopment, allowing for locally appropriate infill development, encouraging meaningful economic development, retaining existing retail and service uses, prioritizing and facilitating preservation of environmentally valuable and recreationally desirable open spaces, and promoting sustainability and good design. Attaining this balance is a challenge in the best of times and is made more difficult by the stagnating national economy. Despite the many ongoing difficulties brought by the recent economic recession, the upside for municipalities is that the slow-down in development activity presents the opportunity to look at the big picture, assess the current conditions and plan proactively for the future.

For reference, the following is a listing of the relevant statutory requirements:

40:55D-89 Periodic examination.

The governing body shall, at least every ten years, provide for a general reexamination of its Master Plan and development regulations by the planning 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 county planning board. A notice that the report and resolution have been prepared shall be sent to the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality, who may, on behalf of the governing body of the municipality, request a copy of the report and resolution. A reexamination shall be completed at least once every ten years from the previous reexamination.

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 planning 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 al.) 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.

40:55D-89.1. Reexamination report; absence of adoption.

The absence of the adoption by the planning board of a reexamination report pursuant to section 76 of P.L. 1975, c. 291 (C. 40:55D-89) shall constitute a rebuttable presumption that the municipal development regulations are no longer reasonable.

II. Borough of Bellmawr Overview

The land area of Borough of Bellmawr is three (3) square miles and is located in the northwest part of Camden County. Neighboring municipalities include Mt. Ephraim and Haddon Heights to the north and northeast; Barrington and Runnemede to the south and southeast; and Brooklawn to the northwest. The Borough is bounded by the mean high-water line of the Big Timber Creek to the west. The Borough of Westville and the Township of Deptford, both in Gloucester County, are located across the Big Timber Creek.

The 2019 population estimate for Bellmawr is 11,398 persons based on the 2019 American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The development patterns of Bellmawr and the surrounding municipalities can be characterized as suburban, with development consisting of medium density single family and multi-family residential neighborhoods, with industrial and larger commercial uses near the limited access highways, and concentrations of mixed uses and commercial development along major roadways such as Black Horse Pike and Browning Road.

III. Reexamination of the Master Plan

The Borough is undertaking this Master Plan Reexamination in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 to review the Borough's planning policies, to ensure that the Borough's planning documents reinforce one another, to set the stage for consistency between the Master Plan and the zoning ordinances and to provide the underlying basis for future Borough planning efforts. The Master Plan Reexamination outlines the considerations required by Municipal Land Use Law (Section 40:55D-89) and provides the responses as appropriate. The first three sections (A, B, and C) require a look back at the Borough's earlier Master Plans, and include observations and an assessment of current conditions, as well as consideration of changes since the last Master Plan

was prepared. The last two sections (D and E) include recommendations for actions to guide land use and related policies into the future.

**A. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
(N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89a)**

The 1977 Master Plan for Land Use set forth problems and objectives relating to land development at the time.

The goals and objectives were reviewed in detail in the various Master Plan Reexaminations since that time, most recently adopted in 2010.

This Master Plan Reexamination process presents an opportunity to review the principles, goals, and objectives that laid the foundations for the 2010 Master Plan Reexamination, and to consider whether the goals and objectives have been achieved, whether they are still relevant and appropriate, or whether changing circumstances dictate that they be revised. The 2010 Master Plan Reexamination indicated that the purpose of the reexamination report was primarily to address the issue of properties having split zoning and where necessary, recommend measures to provide for development or expansion of businesses in such areas without negatively impacting adjacent residential uses.

The specific goals and objectives are listed in the 2010 Master Plan Reexaminations are provided below. Recommendations and any proposed amendments will follow in Section D.

2010 Goals and Objectives

1. The Borough must continue to address the housing, transportation and social service needs of its elderly residents as they age in place.
2. The Borough should join with the County and other municipalities along the Black Horse Pike Corridor to identify and implement potential inter- municipal as well as local solutions to the problems of the small businesses in the Black Horse Pike Corridor.
3. The Borough should continue its compliance with the COAH regulations by updating its Housing Element to comply with the current COAH requirements.
4. The Borough should continue with its efforts to redevelop the Fazzio Landfill by implementing the findings of the investigation for designating this area as a redevelopment area.
5. The Borough should continue its active role in the design and construction of the NJDOT Alternate 5-B Interchange between Route #295 and Route #42.
6. The Borough should participate as appropriate in the ongoing statewide NJSDRP planning process. The goals and objectives of the NJSDRP as they apply to Bellmawr Borough are consistent with the local goals, objectives, and policies advanced through the Borough's Master Plan and its subsequent Reexaminations.

7. Investigate areas with split Residential 'A' – Business 'A' zoning to determine if such a condition restricts the expansion or redevelopment of commercial properties in such sites to expand tax base and promote job opportunities for Borough residents.

B. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.

(N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89b)

Many of the goals and objectives set forth by the Planning Board in the 2010 Master Plan Reexamination remain salient today. However, over the course of ten years some problems have been reduced, other challenges have remained, and evolving conditions have brought different problems and potential solutions to the forefront.

Steps toward meeting many of the land use objectives identified in the 2010 Master Plan Reexamination were made by amending the zoning code and by proactively pursuing grants for transportation and community improvements. In some cases the objectives have been met, while other situations have been more difficult. Below is a review of the Goals and Objectives of the Master Plan Reexamination and a brief explanation of changes or issues that have occurred since 2010.

The goals and objectives taken from the 2010 Master Plan Reexamination are as follows:

1. The Borough must continue to address the housing, transportation and social service needs of its elderly residents as they age in place.

Response: Remains valid.

2. The Borough should join with the County and other municipalities along the Black Horse Pike Corridor to identify and implement potential inter- municipal as well as local solutions to the problems of the small businesses in the Black Horse Pike Corridor.

Response: Remains valid.

3. The Borough should continue its compliance with the COAH regulations by updating its Housing Element to comply with the current COAH requirements.

Response: The Borough currently has a present need (rehabilitation) of 36 units, a prior round need of 107 units and a prospective need of zero (0) units. Due to continued lack of development pressures, the Borough opted not to participate in the current Court administered process.

4. The Borough should continue with its efforts to redevelop the Fazzio Landfill by implementing the findings of the investigation for designating this area as a redevelopment area.

- *Response: No longer valid. The Borough adopted the January 2006, (Revised February 2008) Route 42/Landfill Redevelopment Study Area and Redevelopment Plan which has since been replaced by the May 2014 Amended Bellmawr Redevelopment Plan.*

5. The Borough should continue its active role in the design and construction of the NJDOT Alternate 5-B Interchange between Route #295 and Route #42.

Response: Remains valid.

6. The Borough should participate as appropriate in the ongoing statewide New Jersey State Development Plan and Redevelopment Plan (NJSDRP) planning process. The goals and objectives of the NJSDRP as they apply to Bellmawr Borough are consistent with the local goals, objectives, and policies advanced through the Borough's Master Plan and its subsequent Reexaminations.

Response: Remains valid.

7. Investigate areas with split Residential 'A' – Business 'A' zoning to determine if such a condition restricts the expansion or redevelopment of commercial properties in such sites to expand tax base and promote job opportunities for Borough residents.

Rezone 156 West Browning Road (Block 164 Lot 3) to Business 'A'. Former IGA supermarket retail center, now the Aldi supermarket retail center.

- (i) Rezone 141 Kings Highway (Block 1, Lot 1) to Business 'A'. Formerly the Pennant East bar, now approved for "Public Storage" self storage facility currently under construction by PV Asset Management.

Response: No longer valid.

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, 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.

(N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89c)

1. Borough of Bellmawr Policies, Goals, Objectives, Concerns

While the Borough has not seen a fundamental shift in the assumptions, goals and objectives that formed the basis for the 2010 Master Plan Reexamination; there have been some circumstantial changes in and around the Borough, some changes to statewide policies and regulations that impact the Borough, and some new perspectives on how to respond to economic and social changes. Many small to medium sized developed suburbs, such as Bellmawr, face common problems that can be solved more efficiently and effectively with coordination and cooperation. Such cooperation can also provide a shared voice to advocate for the concerns of similarly situated municipalities.

While many of the Borough's goals and objectives have remained steady over the years since the 1977 Master Plan for Land Use Element was adopted, the means to achieve them have evolved over time. Experience has informed the Borough's planning strategy. As the Borough has gained some experience with revitalization planning and in dealing with the challenges of redevelopment and service delivery faced by mature suburban communities,

the opportunities for alternative means of reaching goals and objectives have been considered.

The changes in development patterns since the 2010 reexamination (and most recently due to the current pandemic) may require changes in the way zoning and planning for commercial and retail should be practiced moving forward. E-commerce, office and warehouses may be reviewed as additional uses to focus on with the changing commercial climate that is focused more on on-line ordering as opposed to in-person shopping and dining. The economic recession has set back efforts to achieve a stable commercial occupancy rate. From a planning perspective the slow-down due to the pandemic provides an opportunity to prepare for the economic rebound and changes in commerce by laying the foundations for a diverse and sustainable economy. The recession has resulted in higher unemployment, decreased in-person consumer spending, increase in vacancies in the retail, dining and commercial real estate sectors, and increased demand for existing housing stock and multifamily housing. These impacts have been felt across the State and the nation and have affected all sectors of the economy and people of all income levels. The economy will take additional time to fully rebound. The recent economic conditions have altered some of the assumptions upon which land use decisions had been made over the prior real estate booms.

While economic recovery from the pandemic is continuing, the changes to the way of doing business that have taken place may have longer lasting impacts on society's preferences, priorities, and housing choices, directing more interest toward redevelopment and "smart growth" in the long run. These newer uses could be added to the existing zoning with appropriate buffers that would complement additional uses. The housing market is moving out of cities and a market for lots in compact neighborhoods with an established sense of community and sense of place, with smaller homes that are more energy efficient and closer to places of work may be increasing as it is around New York and Philadelphia suburbs. Working from home trend may continue and have lasting impacts, as well as the change in consumer preference will be to the benefit of Bellmawr.

In order to seize on opportunities to encourage the foundations of a vibrant community over the long term, Bellmawr will need to: encourage the maintenance and modernization of the existing housing stock so that it remains relevant and desirable in the real estate market, encourage the emergence of a unified design scheme in the commercial areas, enhance pedestrian amenities, and reinforce a sense of place that separates sought-after communities from those that are more nondescript.

Some creative planning and redevelopment opportunities may provide for logistics parking for delivery vehicles which support e-commerce and zoning for warehousing and allowing additional housing opportunities in the Borough's commercial districts and redevelopment areas to address the vacancy of retail and office spaces that may no longer be viable. At the same time, the Borough is mindful of the financial constraints faced by homeowners and business owners, and wishes to retain its residents and businesses without placing undue financial strains upon them. The Master Plan Reexamination seeks to set the stage for the necessary balance.

Specific Land Use and Development issues that have arisen since the last Master Plan Reexamination in 2010 are outlined below. The observations and issues lead to recommendations for policy changes and/or implementation of regulatory changes in Section D.

- a. **Commercial Vacancy.** The changes in development patterns since the 2010 reexamination (and most recently due to the current pandemic) may require changes in the way zoning and planning for commercial and retail should be practiced moving forward.
- b. **Redevelopment and rehabilitation opportunities.** The Borough should look at existing and potential Redevelopment and Rehabilitation areas that could incentivize private redevelopment throughout the Borough.
- c. **Zoning Regulation of “New” Uses.** There are some contemporary uses that were likely not intentionally omitted from the permitted uses within the Borough’s zoning code. The Borough Council may wish to amend the zoning code to account for these uses.
- d. **Borough Zoning Ordinance.** The Borough’s Zoning Ordinance is not currently available in electronic searchable format. Consideration should be given to recodification of the Borough’s Zoning Ordinance and including the Ordinance on the Borough’s website. In addition, the zoning ordinance should be updated to clearly indicate bulk standards.
- e. **Greening of the Community.** As society has become more seriously concerned about the environmental and economic effects of excessive dependence on fossil fuels and of wasteful consumption of energy and resources, there is increased interest in the means to establish a more sustainable economy and lifestyle. The Master Plan may recommend general or specific strategies.

The following specific statutes, regulations and plans have changed since the 2010 reexamination:

1. Renewable Energy

The State Legislature has enacted several pieces of new legislation over the last year that affect renewable energy facilities (solar, wind and biomass). The various laws converge to generally encourage the production of alternative and renewable energy, yet without local efforts to link the state laws to local ordinances, there is some confusion about what is and is not permitted, and a lack of clarity about municipal land use intentions.

Below is a summary of the laws enacted by the New Jersey State Legislature.

- **P.L. 2009 C 213** (January 16, 2010) relates to the installation of solar, wind and biomass energy generation facilities on preserved farms and commercial (unpreserved) farms and also modifies the Right to Farm Act and farmland assessment as they relate to renewable energy facilities.
- **P.L. 2009 C 146** amends Municipal Land Use Law N.J.S.A. 40:55D-4 and 7 to include definitions for “Inherently Beneficial Use” and “Wind, solar or photovoltaic energy facility or structure”.

- **Inherently Beneficial Use** - “a use which is universally considered of value to the community because it fundamentally serves the public good and promotes the general welfare. Such a use includes, but is not limited to, a hospital, school, child care center, group home, or a wind, solar or photovoltaic energy facility or structure.”
- **Wind, Solar or photovoltaic energy facility or structure** – “a facility or structure for the purpose of supplying electrical energy produced from wind, solar, or photovoltaic technologies, whether such facility or structure is a principal use, a part of the principal use, or an accessory use or structure.”
- **P.L. 2009 C 35** (March 31, 2009) adds a section to Municipal Land Use Law N.J.S.A. 40:55D-66.11 which provides that a renewable energy facility is a permitted use within every industrial zone as long as the parcel consists of at least 20 contiguous acres owned by the same entity.
- **P.L. 2009 C 244** (January 16, 2010) creates new sections within Municipal Land Use Law N.J.S.A. 40:55D-66.12 to 40:55D-66.15, to provide guidance for wind energy systems, and provides that ordinances adopted by municipalities to regulate the installation and operation of small wind energy systems shall not unreasonably limit such installations or unreasonably hinder the performance of such installations. The law defines the unreasonable hindrances and requires that within 10 months of enactment of adoption of the law (January 2010), the Director of the Division of Codes and Standards in the DCA , in consultation with the DEP will issue a technical bulletin including a model municipal ordinance for the construction of small wind energy systems.
- **N.J.S.A. 52:27D-141.1 (March 31, 2009)** provides that developers of 25 or more single family residential dwelling units shall offer the installation of solar energy systems as an option to homeowners.
- **P.L. 2010 C 4** (April 22, 2010) provides that solar panels are not to be included as impervious surface for impervious cover calculations or for storm water management planning, only the foundation may be considered impervious.
- **P.L. 2017 C 275** amends Municipal Land Use Law N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28 to include (f) a statement of strategy concerning:
 - (i) smart growth, in part, shall consider potential locations for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations,
 - (ii) storm resiliency with respect to energy supply, flood-prone areas, and environmental infrastructure,
 - (iii) environmental sustainability,
- Municipal Land Use Law N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28 to include (g) showing existing and proposed location of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

2. State Policy

a. State Plan. The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan was adopted in March of 2001. The Draft of the updated State Plan was released in 2009, but has not yet been adopted so the 2001 Plan remains the plan in effect at this time. The State Plan designates Bellmawr as part of the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA-1). PA-1 is a smart growth area, which is a generally developed area where investment in infrastructure and redevelopment are encouraged. Within Planning Area 1, the State Plan's intention is to:

- provide for much of the state's future redevelopment;
- revitalize cities and towns;
- promote growth in compact forms;
- stabilize older suburbs;
- re-design areas of sprawl; and
- protect the character of existing stable communities.

These goals are to be met by strategies to upgrade or replace aging infrastructure; retain and expand employment opportunities; upgrade and expand housing to attract a balanced residential population; restore or stabilize a threatened environmental base through brownfields redevelopment and greenway enhancement; and managing traffic effectively.

As part of the Metropolitan Planning Area, redevelopment and revitalization in Bellmawr is encouraged and supported by the State Plan.

b. The New Jersey Residential Site Improvement Standards (N.J.A.C. 5:21) supersede municipal zoning regulations when there are conflicts.

c. The New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing's (COAH) Third Round regulations were initially adopted in 2004, and substantially invalidated in an Appellate Division decision in January of 2007. COAH then released new Third Round regulations that became effective on June 2, 2008, and amendments were immediately proposed and became effective on October, 2008. The rules were again challenged on many fronts and after two years, on October 8, 2010 the Appellate Division invalidated the "growth share" methodology for establishing affordable housing obligations. Some aspects of affordable housing rules and regulations remain in effect. On March 10, 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) has failed to act, and as a result, the Courts assumed jurisdiction over the Fair Housing Act. At the time of the 2010 Master Plan Reexamination Report, the Borough had updated and adopted the Round Three Housing Element and Fair Share Plan to comply with COAH. At that time, growth share was still in effect. Since then, the growth share methodology along with COAH has been dismantled and is being handled through the Court system. Currently, the Borough has a present need (rehabilitation) of 36 units, a prior round need of 107 units and a prospective need of zero (0) units. Due to continued lack of development pressures, the Borough opted not to participate in the current Court administered process.

d. Stormwater:

Municipal Storm Water Regulations were adopted (N.J.A.C. 7:8) in 2004 requiring that all municipalities adopt a Stormwater Plan. The Borough is in compliance with the regulations.

Water Quality Management rules (N.J.A.C. 7:15) were adopted by the NJ DEP and became effective on July 7, 2008. These Rules assigned primary wastewater management planning responsibility to the 21 counties. The Borough is in compliance.

Stormwater Management rules were amended and adopted by the NJDEP, effective March 2, 2021. The Borough has revised the Borough's Ordinance to comply with the recently amended and adopted NJDEP Stromwater Management rules.

The Borough should regularly review all stormwater regulations as promulgated by NJDEP and make any revisions to Borough codes and ordinances as applicable.

f. New Jersey Statewide Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act (N.J.S.A. 13:1E-99.11 et seq.) calls for source separation and recycling of solid waste throughout the state. The original goal was for a minimum of 15% of the total solid waste stream to be recycled. This goal was then increased to 25%, then 40% and finally 60%. The New Jersey Office of Recycling oversees the State Recycling Fund, which is administered via a tonnage grant program. Each county was required to enact district recycling plans to specify the recyclable materials, create a plan to collect and market the materials, and appoint a recycling coordinator to administer the district. Each municipality was required to designate a recycling coordinator, adopt ordinances to include recycling provisions and enforcement procedures for residents and businesses, and to collect the recyclables either by contract or municipal services. The Master Plan for each municipality must also include requirements for recycling, requiring that provisions for recycling be incorporated into new residential, commercial and industrial development (N.J.S.A. 13:1E-99.16). The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) was amended in response to the New Jersey Source Separation and Recycling Act adopted in 1987. One of the purposes of Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2) specifically addresses recycling. The Borough is in compliance with applicable recycling reporting and requirements.

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.

(N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89d)

A new comprehensive Master Plan is not needed at this time, as the planning foundations set forth in the 2010 Master Plan Reexamination remain relevant today. This section outlines the recommended changes and additions to the Master Plan. Together the Borough's 1977 Master Plan for Land Use, along with the 2006 and 2010 Master Plan Reexaminations will form the whole of the Borough's Master Plan.

The specific Master Plan Amendments and Recommendations are listed below and will serve to ensure that the Borough's planning policies and regulations support the goals and objectives as the Borough strives to implement effective regulations and efficient processes.

2. Goals and Objectives. Several nearby inner-ring suburbs have taken a proactive approach toward planning and redevelopment over the last decade and have realized some success in attracting investment, redevelopment, and new residents. Deliberate steps must be taken to cultivate the sense of place that attracts people and businesses and to plan for and open the door for investment, while also demanding high quality design and construction to enhance community character. Investments beget other investments, and when guided by strong planning can add up to enhance the cultural, historical, and artistic qualities of a municipality.

The Borough of Bellmawr is situated close to major transportation routes, major job centers, and has a variety of residential housing types. The Borough, along with many of its neighboring municipalities, has been working to retain and attract business and redevelopment and to sustain its thriving neighborhoods. The sense of helplessness about the decline of downtown business districts in the 1980s has given way to a glimmer of optimism about the potential to capitalize on unique assets and defining character of older suburban communities.

3. Commercial Vacancy. The changes in development patterns since the 2010 reexamination (and most recently due to the current pandemic) may require changes in the way zoning and planning for commercial and retail should be practiced moving forward. Some creative planning and redevelopment opportunities may provide zoning for e-commerce, logistics parking for delivery vehicles which support e-commerce, warehousing, and allowing for additional housing opportunities in the Borough's commercial districts and redevelopment areas.

4. Redevelopment and rehabilitation opportunities. There is potential for the Borough to initiate revitalization by declaring the entire Borough as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation. (See Section E of this report for expanded discussion).

5. Zoning Regulation of “New” Uses. There are some contemporary uses that were likely not intentionally omitted from the permitted uses within the Borough's zoning code. These uses include warehouses, e-commerce businesses, gyms and health clubs, internet cafes, micro and craft breweries and distilleries, coffee roasters, solar energy facilities, telecommunications towers, and electric car charging stations. The Borough Council may wish to amend the zoning code to account for these uses.

6. Sidewalks and Crosswalks. Sidewalks and pedestrian crossings are an essential element of a successful “downtown” business area, as well as for connecting residential areas. The importance of sidewalks cannot be overstated. We recommend the Borough review and determine if there are specific locations for sidewalks and crosswalks to be constructed and/or improved upon.

7. Green Buildings. Looking toward the future, it is recommended that private property owners, developers and builders, as well as public institutions incorporate green building technologies and techniques into development and redevelopment projects in Bellmawr. Developers may refer to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) system developed by the United States Green Building Council for guidance in choosing sustainable design elements and building materials. The Planning Board does not recommend that specific compliance with LEED or other green rating systems be required at this time, as there are more ways than one to meet “green” objectives, the technologies are still evolving, and green building requirements may make construction

more expensive in the short term. Given current economic conditions the Borough does not propose to make the requirements mandatory. However, it is the Borough's intent to encourage energy efficiency and green building technologies, and to provide reasonable flexibility to enable redevelopment and construction that makes efficient use of energy, water, space, and solar gain and that improve both indoor and outdoor air quality.

8. **Renewable Energy and Sustainability. Sustainable land use planning** incorporates all the plan elements and topics that have traditionally been included in Master Plans, but takes a more balanced approach that recognizes the interconnectivity of community, land use, the environment, transportation, and the economy. Sustainability requires that human activities be adapted to the constraints and opportunities of the natural systems that are needed to support life.

Interest in reducing greenhouse gases and increasing energy independence has been on the rise. Currently the Borough's land use regulations do not provide guidance for the installation of small wind turbines, geothermal systems, or solar energy systems. Though the prospects for wind energy in a fully developed municipality may seem remote, it is recommended that the Borough adopt standards for renewable energy technologies such as solar /photovoltaic energy systems in order to reduce uncertainty about requirements and the local approval process. Additionally the installation of geothermal systems is encouraged for municipal properties, as an energy efficient means to provide clean and cost effective heating and cooling.

The provision of renewable energy promotes the public health, safety and general welfare by contributing to a reduction in air pollution, creating green jobs, reducing energy costs over time, and improving the environment. The local provision of energy also supports security and safety. The adoption of standards for renewable energy systems will ensure that solar electric systems are permitted in the Borough with appropriate regulations and design standards to ensure safe installation and to protect adjacent land owners. It is anticipated that renewable energy facilities in the Borough will mainly be accessory to residential or commercial uses, where energy produced is primarily for use on site, with excess power going back to the electric grid. Solar production on large commercial rooftops, is specifically encouraged. It is also recommended that the Borough consider whether standards should be developed for solar and wind energy commercial operations where the solar and/or wind facilities are a principal use that produce electricity for commercial sale. A recent State law has amended the Municipal Planning Law to define wind, solar or photovoltaic energy facilities or structures as inherently beneficial uses. By adopting regulations the Borough may direct the renewable energy facilities to locations the Borough deems most appropriate.

9. **Affordable Housing.** At the time of the 2010 reexamination, growth share was still in effect and the Borough had prepared and adopted a revised Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. The Borough was prepared to cooperate with COAH. Since then, the growth share methodology along with COAH has been dismantled and is being handled through the Court system. Currently, the Borough has a present need (rehabilitation) of 36 units, a prior round need of 107 units and a prospective need of zero (0) units. Due to continued lack of development pressures, the Borough opted not to participate in the current Court administered process.

In view of the Borough's continuing desire to maintain opportunities for a variety and choice in housing, the Borough will monitor the evolution of the housing laws and regulations.

- 10. The New Jersey Residential Site Improvement Standards (N.J.A.C. 5:21)** supersede municipal zoning regulations when there are conflicts. The zoning ordinance shall reference this and remove and conflicts if they exist.
- 11. Stormwater Management rules** were amended and adopted by the NJDEP, effective March 2, 2021. The Borough has revised the Borough's Ordinance to comply with the recently amended and adopted NJDEP Stormwater Management rules. The Borough should regularly review all stormwater regulations as promulgated by NJDEP and make any revisions to Borough codes and ordinances as applicable.
- 12.** In response to the addition of planning for resiliency, smart growth and sustainability to the MLUL, the Borough should consider the following:
 - a. The Borough should evaluate and encourage potential locations for electric vehicle charging stations in parking lots.
 - b. The Borough should investigate sustainability ordinances and programs that would green the municipality and make it more storm resilient. Some examples would be the integration of green infrastructure such as infrastructure to capture rainfall; cool buildings and pavement; vegetated mid-block bump-outs & crossings on municipal roads, vegetated corner bump-outs on municipal roads, tree trenches and perforated stormwater pipes, green stormwater planters, permeable concrete, permeable pavers, street-side swales, green roofs, downspout disconnection, rain gardens, rainwater harvesting, etc. The Borough may investigate incorporating elements of Low Impact Development (LID) and green infrastructure into their existing zoning and land development codes and promote this method to developers.
 - c. The Borough may also take initiative to build green certified buildings whenever undertaking new construction. Green building certification programs include USGBC LEED, EPA Energy Star for Buildings Program, Passivhaus Standard, National Green Building Standard, Living Building Challenge, Net-Zero Energy Building, Green Globes system, etc.
- 13.** Review the Adult Use Cannabis legislation and make a determination as to what will be permitted and or prohibited within the Borough. Create land use ordinances and regulations to enable the Borough to plan for these uses in appropriate locations. This must be acted on by Borough Council no later than August 2021.

**E. The recommendations of the planning 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 al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal Master Plan, and recommend changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.
(N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89e)**

It is the Borough's intent to maintain the option to utilize all available planning tools to work toward realization of the Borough's vision for a healthy, vibrant, and attractive business environment, to improve the quality of life for current and future residents, and to maintain and enhance opportunities for smart growth and economic development. As the Borough continues to monitor and assess conditions in the nonresidential areas in the context of the overall land use picture, specific properties or areas may emerge as candidates for redevelopment. Where redevelopment or rehabilitation area designation has the potential to advance the Borough's goals and objectives, to incentivize redevelopment of properties vital to anchoring the local economy, to create community value, and to have positive ripple effects throughout the Borough, then those areas may be recommended for study in accordance with Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

The Planning Board would recommend for specific consideration at this time are as follows:

1. The Borough should consider the adoption of a Borough-wide Rehabilitation Area. The state statute setting forth the guidelines for areas in need of rehabilitation specifically permits a finding of need for rehabilitation that extends to the entire area of a municipality. A delineated area may be determined to be in need of rehabilitation if the municipality finds that a program of rehabilitation is expected to prevent further deterioration and to promote overall development and if one of the following six (6) conditions exist: (1) a significant portion of structures therein are in a deteriorated or substandard condition; (2) more than half of the housing stock in the delineated area is at least 50 years old; (3) there is a pattern of vacancy, abandonment or underutilization of properties in the area; (4) there is a persistent arrearage of property tax payments on properties in the area; (5) environmental contamination is discouraging improvements and investment in properties in the area; or (6) a majority of the water and sewer infrastructure in the delineated area is at least 50 years old and is in need of repair or substantial maintenance.

The benefits of Rehabilitation include:

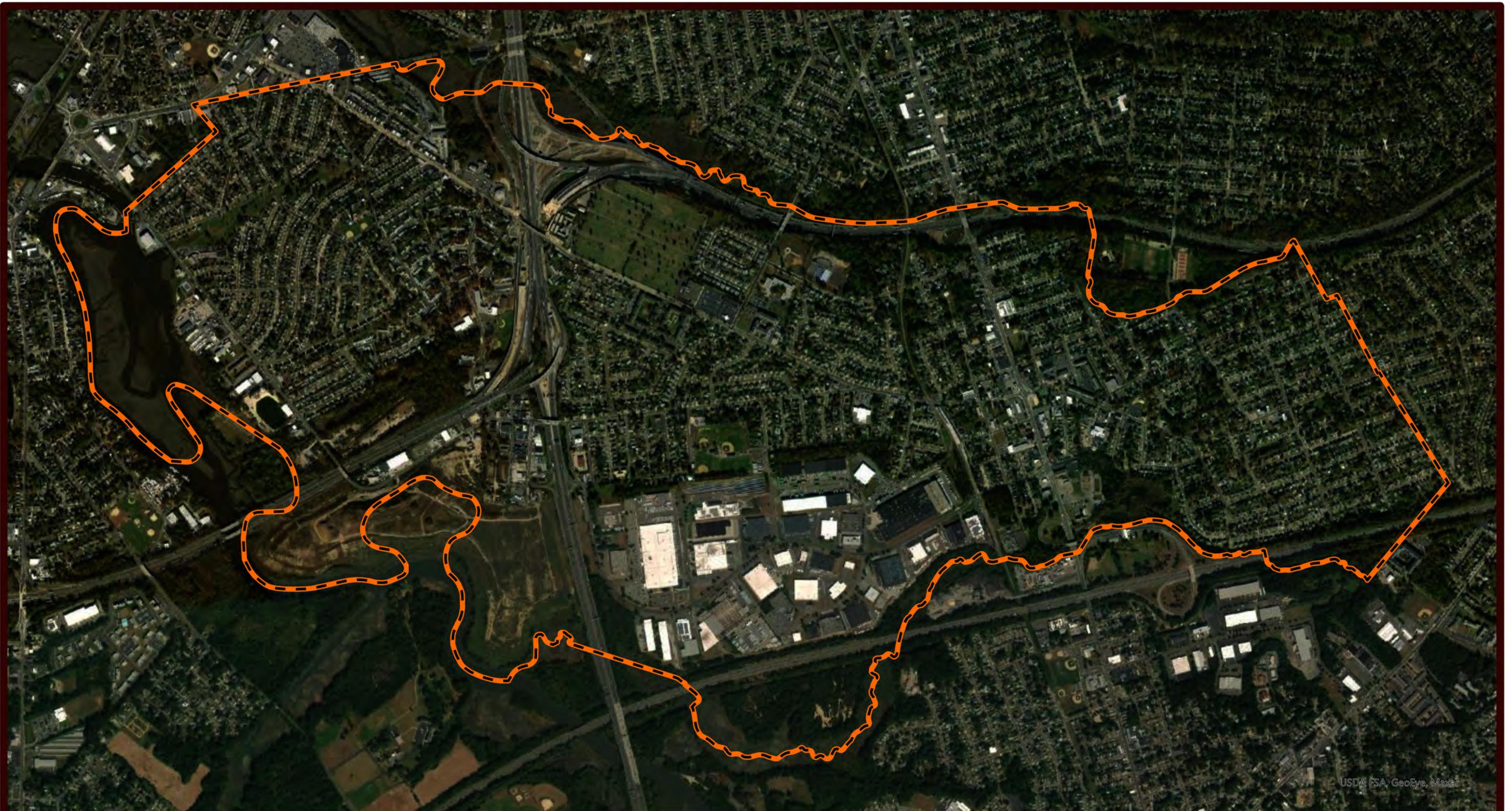
- All powers and rights of a redevelopment designation except for the power of eminent domain and the ability to confer long-term PILOTs.
- Tax exemptions or abatements for up to 5 years.
- Eligibility for tax exemptions or abatements can be customized by a municipality based on structure and/or types of improvements.
- Eligibility for tax exemptions or abatements can differentiate among the various neighborhoods, zones, areas or portions of the area in need of rehabilitation with respect to eligibility.

IV. Conclusion

The recommendations in sections D and E above will assist the Borough in advancing its goals, which include supporting existing businesses, attracting new employers, encouraging in-fill development and redevelopment, incorporating inviting and vibrant public spaces, and improving architectural character and design. Despite the challenges faced by the Borough of Bellmawr, the Borough has much strength, and is well positioned to capitalize on its assets to enhance the sense of community, convenience, and character that make the Borough desirable to many residents.

MAP 1

Aerial Map



USDA FSA, GeoEye, Maxar

BA **BACH** Associates, PC
ENGINEERS • ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS

304 White Horse Pike
Haddon Heights, New Jersey 08035
Tel: 856-546-8611
Fax: 856-546-8612
www.BachDesignGroup.com

Borough of Bellmawr Camden County, NJ

*This map was developed using NJGIN/NJDEP Geographic Information System digital data, but this is a secondary product which has not been verified by NJGIN/NJDEP and is not state authorized

Map Data & Source:

Data Source: NJGIS, CCODP, Esri

Scale: 1" = 1,200'

Date: April 5, 2021

Drafted by: Chloe Bach

Prepared by: Candace Kanaplie, PP, AICP

BELLMAWR BOROUGH AERIAL MAP



MAP 2

Existing Zoning



Gloucester
City

BOROUGH OF BELLMAWR

Camden County, New Jersey

Zoning Map

Legend

Zoning Designations

Yellow	"A" Residential
Orange	"B" Residential
Pink	Business "A"
Red	Business "B"
Dark Red	Business "C"
Light Blue	Flood Plain
Dark Blue	Institutional
Light Green	Heavy Industrial
Dark Green	Light Industrial
Light Green	Municipal Goverment and Educational
Purple	Office
Dark Green	Recreational

NJDOT Roads

Red	Interstate
Green	Highway Authority Route
Light Green	State Highway
Yellow	County Route
Dash	Local Road
Dash-dot	Ramp

Route 42/Landfill Redevelopment Plan
Bellmawr Waterfront Redevelopment

