

## Redevelopment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This Redevelopment FAQ is intended to provide background on the history of redevelopment in Dunellen, to present a summary of the actions the Mayor and Dunellen Borough Council have undertaken toward redevelopment, to offer a timeline of the current redevelopment project, and to answer some specific questions regarding certain actions or results arising from the redevelopment. An FAQ cannot by its nature be totally comprehensive, but we believe that what you read here will be a sufficient starting point that can be followed-up by contacting the Municipal Clerk's Office.

### **Q: We have been hearing about redevelopment in Dunellen for many years. What is the historical background for this redevelopment?**

**A:** The Mayor and Dunellen Borough Council believe that a vital downtown is essential to our community's well-being. A downtown must be attractive, safe, and provide goods and services that answer the needs of our residents. The rise of regional shopping malls and strip-malls on highways such as Route 22 negatively affected Dunellen's downtown and the Council has spent much time discussing how to bring new life to our business community.

The Dunellen Borough Council on October 15, 2001, authorized the Dunellen Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation as to whether the study area (Route 28 from the Middlesex to the Plainfield borders, and one block east and west on both sides) qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment. This resulted in a "Report on a Study to Determine the Qualification of the Dunellen Downtown Redevelopment Study Area as a Redevelopment Area" which was presented to the Dunellen Planning Board and adopted by resolution on April 28, 2003. The report and resolution were forwarded to the Dunellen Borough Council which accepted it and by resolution dated May 5, 2003, designated the subject area as in need of redevelopment.

Borough attorneys, engineers and planners in consultation with the Mayor and Council created the "Dunellen Downtown Redevelopment Plan, Phase One" that was adopted by ordinance in July 2004 and periodically updated. This document is the basic zoning and land use blue print for redevelopment and it designated three main sites: Site #1 (Train Station North), Site #2 (Train Station South) and Site #3 (the 19 acres between the train tracks and Columbia Street commonly known as the "Art Color Complex").

In early 2004, the Mayor and Dunellen Council created a Redevelopment Agency consisting of members of the Council and Planning Board. The Redevelopment Agency would take the lead in any future redevelopment talks and report back to the Council for any necessary action.

It had been obvious to all for many years that Dunellen is a desirable location in which to live, in part due to its proximity to the Raritan Valley line that goes to Newark and New York

City. In late 2004, the owners of the Art Color Complex, once the site of a major printing plant that employed hundreds of workers, made it known that they wanted to turn the site that was now used mostly for warehouses and light industry into a more attractive mixed-use housing/retail setting. By a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, the Redevelopment Agency received and reviewed six proposals for redevelopment from major developers. The proposals considered improvements to all three Sites. On February 20, 2006, the Council designated Kaplan Companies as the redeveloper. A condition of the designation was that an Agreement between the Borough and Kaplan Companies be arrived at within a certain time. When that did not occur, Kaplan was de-designated as of January 2007 and Baker Residential was selected as the Redeveloper. Unfortunately, before the Borough and Baker could arrive at a mutually accepted Agreement, the financial melt-down of 2007-2008 occurred and formal redevelopment activities were put on hold at the request of the Redeveloper.

While being disappointed with the economic circumstances which stalled the redevelopment plans of the Borough, the Mayor and Borough Council nonetheless moved ahead on other fronts, the most significant of which was the application to the New Jersey Department of Transportation to be designated a Transit Village. This was achieved in 2012 and it has afforded us several valuable opportunities for technical assistance as well as made us eligible for a wider range of grant opportunities. Smaller developers, reading about our Transit Village status, took notice of Dunellen and began their own building projects.

The economy slowly began to recover, and the Art Color Complex owners again expressed an interest in developing the site. This time, they would do so in partnership with established builders. Negotiations ensued, and on July 13, 2017, the Dunellen Borough Council by resolution entered into an Agreement with Brudner Redevelopment Partners Urban Renewal LLC.

**Q: Where can I get copies of all relevant Redevelopment documents, including Agreements and diagrams that illustrate what the new development will look like?**

**A:** These documents, plans, reports and illustrations have been uploaded to the Redevelopment page on the Borough's website:

<http://www.dunellen-nj.gov/redevelopment>

Information can also be found at the Dunellen Municipal Clerk's Office.

**Q: What will the new development consist of?**

**A:** On the 19-acre "Art Color" complex, there will be 130 townhomes for sale and 252 apartments for rent, with 58 of the rental apartments being affordable homes. There will also be a 9,600 sq. ft. commercial/retail building on the former World Gym site. Residents of the

complex will have access to a Club House with a community room, barbecue area, weight room and pool. The development will be home to over 500 new Dunellen residents.

**Q: How will Dunellen residents benefit from redevelopment?**

**A:** The redevelopment of this property will bring new life to our business district with people living within walking distance who will utilize the many shops and restaurants. In addition, redevelopment will bring a much-needed new revenue stream over the next 30 years allowing the Borough to provide improvements and additional resources to our residents.

Other reasons for redevelopment:

- To promote the most effective use of all the Redevelopment Zone property according to the long-term vision as set forth in the Dunellen Redevelopment Plan and our Borough's Master Plan.
- To increase the property tax base of the Borough through the addition of millions of dollars of enhanced real estate and structures. In an immediate sense, this increase positively affects the results from the funding formula that sets public library minimum funding.
- To promote the creation of job opportunities in the Borough that will provide employment prospects for both existing residents as well for others in the area.
- To improve business opportunities through the promotion of new and diverse economic activities. The new residents will patronize our downtown businesses and attend our arts and culture activities.
- To redevelop land occupied by obsolete structures and uses. This aesthetic improvement will have a very positive effect on our public image and will make all other property values rise commensurately.
- To utilize new tax revenues engendered by the development to enhance existing municipal programs and services.
- To help satisfy the court-ordered affordable housing requirements as mandated by the N.J. Supreme Court.

**Q: Will this redevelopment affect my taxes?**

**A:** Redevelopment will likely not directly affect your property taxes, at least in the near short-term. However, our financial projections anticipate that during the next thirty years the development will generate an additional \$35 million in additional revenue and we are very hopeful that this new revenue stream will help to stabilize taxes, or possibly trend toward

lowering them. There will certainly be additional municipal services that the development proceeds will enable us to provide.

**Q: What company is doing the redevelopment?**

**A:** The development of the Art Color complex will be done by two companies. K. Hovnanian will build the townhouses and Prism will build the apartments and retail space. Both companies have many years of experience in building redevelopment sites throughout New Jersey and surrounding states. At the present time, there are no plans in place for development of Site #1 (Train Station North) or Site #2 (Train Station South)

**Q: What is the timeline for the current development?**

**A:** As of September 2018, all tenants of the Art Color complex have vacated the property and the utilities have been shut off. Pest control is being performed as needed in preparation for demolition. Demolition will begin shortly and probably conclude in Spring 2019. Any environmental remediation that is needed will then be done. The next phase will be the infrastructure components such as leveling and grading of the ground, the installation of a new pumping station for wastewater, and the laying of mostly underground utilities. The dwelling units and retail building will then be built, phased over three years. It is estimated that the entire project will take 3-4 years from the start of demolition.

**Q: I am concerned with rats and other vermin escaping during demolition. What is being done to prevent this?**

**A:** Vermin control and elimination is being done by a licensed animal control company. Starting in July 2018, this company has set traps to catch any rats or other animals, including feral cats, which will prevent the animals from escaping during the demolition process. Before any actual demolition begins, this company must present to the Dunellen Construction Office a document called a “Certificate of Abatement” which proves the premises are free from these kinds of animals.

**Q: Will there be dangerous materials such as asbestos and dust because of the demolition? What will be the demolition process?**

**A:** The demolition will be done by Highground Industrial, a nationally known firm with headquarters in Florida and offices in Mahwah, NJ ([www.highgroundind.com](http://www.highgroundind.com)). Highground Industrial provides comprehensive demolition and environmental contracting services, including Remediation, Waste Management, Emergency Response, Asset Recovery and full site work

services.

The first step will be asbestos abatement. The work area will be prepared according to all applicable New Jersey State regulations and the highest level of care will be maintained in the collection and disposal of any asbestos related material.

Next will be general site preparation wherein a fence will be placed around the complex to restrict access and ensure safety. All utilities will have been cut-off and dust control equipment will then be brought to the site.

Explosives will not be used during the project. Instead, all dismantling and demolition of the structures will be conducted using conventional demolition equipment such as hydraulic track excavators which will be equipped with a combination of shears, concrete breakers/grapple attachments, skid steer and front-end loaders. Front-end loaders with grab buckets will remove and segregate the scrap steel and debris generated by the demolition for recycling purposes and for loading trucks with materials for off-site disposal. All work zones will be clearly marked using barricade tape.

During all phases of the demolition activities, airborne dust emissions will be controlled. Dust suppression systems will be placed and activated within the work area to minimize or reduce the generation of visible dust emissions. Engineering controls for dust suppression will generally consist of the use of water misting and spraying devices. As conditions warrant, a large area mister ("Dust Boss" or equivalent) will be employed to ensure fugitive dust emissions are mitigated. The Dust Boss resembles a snow making machine and can cover a large area with a fine mist of water, effectively controlling dust on a large scale when necessary.

**Q: The Art Color Complex was for many years a center of printing. I am concerned that because of this use there may be ground contaminants.**

**A:** The developer has conducted preliminary environmental investigations and found a certain moderate level of ground contaminants that will be safely removed by the developer during and after the demolition process. There will be no leakage of dangerous chemicals into our water supply or any escape of airborne toxins.

**Q: What is the impact on traffic and how is it being resolved?**

**A:** A full traffic study was completed by McDonough & Rea Associates of Manasquan, NJ, which details the current traffic flows and estimates future flows. Their recommendation was that a new traffic light be installed at the intersection of New Market Road and South Washington Avenue. This signal will be coordinated with the traffic signal at North Avenue to avoid back-ups. This study is on the Redevelopment web site page.

**Q: Will there be additional crossing guards at this intersection?**

**A:** We do not think so at this time, given the relatively few additional school children and the new traffic light. However, this situation will be closely monitored.

**Q: What is the anticipated impact of the Art Color complex redevelopment on our schools?**

**A:** The townhomes and apartments are being designed for and marketed to commuters who will take trains or buses to work. They are mostly one or two-bedroom units, with a few three- bedroom units required under New Jersey’s Affordable Housing laws. Our experts calculate that we can expect approximately 41 additional school aged children. This report is on the Redevelopment web site page.

The Mayor and other Borough officials meet regularly with Dunellen School District officials and the School District Superintendent is fully apprised of the development and its progress. The District can expect to receive at least as much a proportion of municipal funding during and after development as it currently receives.

**Q: Will there be direct access to Columbia Park from the development?**

**A:** No. Though not a “gated” community, the development will be a “closed” community in the sense that only residents and their guests need be in the habitable part of the complex. A fence will be built separating the complex from Columbia Park, with a gate and entrance accessible only to complex residents.

**Q: Are any improvements or changes planned to Columbia Park as part of this redevelopment project?**

**A:** Not directly because of the development. However, we are glad to announce that Dunellen has received funding from Middlesex County under an Open Space grant for which the Mayor and Council had applied, and we are working with the School District on separate projects to re-do the tennis courts, build a Gazebo next to the Senior Center, put in artificial turf on the football field, and possibly make additional improvements to the play area and walking path.

**Q: Will the existing Dunellen community be able to access and use the proposed Clubhouse and other amenities of the new development?**

**A:** No. The Clubhouse and pool will be for complex residents only. They will be controlled and maintained by the developer or its management company and any use will be restricted to residents of the complex.

**Q: Will the development require the hiring of additional personnel for the Police Department, Public Works or administrative offices?**

**A:** To serve these new residents properly and safely, additional personnel may need to be added to the Police, DPW, Tax Office, and Construction Office. With the additional property tax revenue generated by the dwellings, any additions will more than pay for themselves.