

Radburn Strategic Plan Study Area – Recommendation – June 18, 2004

The members of the Business Leadership Committee, representing the many diverse constituencies and interests from within the larger community of Fair Lawn, have worked diligently since January, 2004 to assess the strengths, vulnerabilities, opportunities and threats to the area that we identified as the Radburn Strategic Plan Study Area, encompassing the B1 and B3 Zones in and abutting the NJT Railroad lines (a map of the study area is attached).

Committee members toured the district, drew upon the intimate knowledge of the area by those from within the committee who own property, operate businesses and live adjacent to the study area. We were also ably assisted in understanding the issues and opportunities confronting the study area in the conduct of a professional existing conditions assessment study of the area undertaken by local planning and design firm, The Ives Group and its principals, Allen Weitzman and Joel Ives. The assessment of existing conditions report, donated by the firm, is attached. The Committee, and the community of Fair Lawn, have benefited greatly from their donated services and experience.

The committee was able to draw upon the body of experience within other communities whose efforts, via the internet, press, and visitation, were brought to our attention by our facilitator and our own membership. Fair Lawn's own experience on River Road, community's throughout Bergen County (from Bergenfield to Fort Lee, Teaneck to Rutherford) as well as those throughout New Jersey offered perspective and experience upon which we could draw.

- Therefore, the Committee finds
 - Within this body of effort and investigation, and
 - Within the context of the historical antecedents of the founding of the Radburn Community, and the Garden City and New Town's movement in Europe, England and the United States and
 - Mindful of not only the historic hope of the founders of the Radburn community but also the contemporary belief that our communities and their commercial districts should offer our families and their children safe and attractive passageways in and around and through our commercial districts; and
 - With the understanding that the current design of the thoroughfares and cart ways, streets and sidewalks, parking and parking lots of the current district disproportionately favor vehicles over pedestrians; and
 - In the belief that the district lacks almost all of the pedestrian, design and aesthetics most commonly associated with and favoring successfully pedestrian oriented attractive and aesthetically pleasing elements such as wider sidewalks, trees, benches, pedestrian scaled lighting, bike racks and other such elements; and
 - In the belief that the existing parking lots of the district lack basic directional signage and any aesthetic element which softens the starkness of the asphalt to the passerby, and
 - In the belief that the Borough of Fair Lawn, and the residents of the entire community as well as the residents and families of the Radburn neighborhood, together with local business and commercial property owners would be well-served by the strengthening of the district in an effort to attract diverse businesses, invite and better accommodate visitors and prospective and current customers to the area, and

Therefore the Committee recommends

- To the construction of what is commonly called a 'streetscape' project on the public rights of way incorporating the design elements noted above similar to that which was undertaken and completed on River Road and in many other successful commercial districts throughout Bergen County and the State of New Jersey.

The Committee recommends that the design element of the project be coordinated under the auspices of the recommended Fair Lawn Economic Development Corporation (see recommendation in this regard under separate cover).

The Committee, based on the experience of River Road and other communities, believes the cost of the design element of the project would range from \$15,000 to \$25,000. Design proposals should be sought from qualified firms and competitively awarded. The EDC would coordinate the process in cooperation with the Borough Engineer's Office and provide a recommendation to the mayor and council regarding the award of the professional services agreement.

The EDC would work closely with the design firm and the constituencies most impacted by such a project within the study area to develop a design concept supported by the community.

Funding for the design element should be sought from both the public and private sectors to emphasize the public/private nature of this project.

Funding for the engineering and construction phases of the project should be explored with the Borough at the time of the receipt of the construction estimates prepared by the design firm. Also at that time, discussion would focus on the most appropriate strategy to be used to ensure that once the streetscape is built it will be properly and routinely maintained.