

**AMENDMENT TO THE NORTH
BRUNSWICK MASTER PLAN**

**CONTINUED NEED FOR MARKET PRICED
AGE-RESTRICTED HOUSING**

TOWNSHIP OF NORTH BRUNSWICK PLANNING BOARD

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 12, 2009

MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT ADDRESSING THE CONTINUED NEED FOR MARKET PRICED AGE-RESTRICTED HOUSING

Pages 1-5 of the North Brunswick Master Plan, adopted in May of 2006, identify key planning issues facing the Township in 2006.

Item # 23 states, "Evaluate the need for additional age restricted housing in various price ranges throughout the Township."

Item # 26 states, "Analyze Township demographics to determine the need to provide additional age restricted housing."

Table 3 on page 12 of the Master Plan reveals that 18.3% of the Township's population was 55 years of age or older as of 2000. Table 5 on page 13 reveals that this age cohort increased by 23% between 1990 and 2000. The population in this age cohort is anticipated to continue to increase in the short term.

As of today, there are only two age-restricted developments in the Township. The Pincus Apartments, consisting of 200 age restricted units, has a section 8 certificate attached to each unit, resulting in each lower income senior paying no more than 30% of their monthly income for rent. North Brunswick Senior Housing, consisting of 150 lower income units, requires each lower income tenant to be able to pay their rent. Tenants with very low incomes are often assisted by a cosigner on their lease.

Back in 2006 when the current Master Plan was adopted, the Planning Board took into consideration the fact that subdivision and site plan approval had already been granted for a 325 unit age-restricted development off of Old Georges Road. This development, known as "Cascades", was approved on property that was formerly zoned for 20,000 square foot single family lots. The Planning Board recommended that the Council rezone this property several years earlier in order to address the Township's need for market priced age-restricted housing. At that time, the Planning Board recommended tripling the density to approximately 5 units per acre in order to make the production of age-restricted housing with appropriate amenities feasible.

Given the fact that approvals were already in place for 325 market priced age-restricted units, the Planning Board only designated one additional site for the provision of age-restricted housing. The 2006 Master Plan recommended that the 25 acre site known as the Treumann Storage Site be changed from industrial to age-restricted residential. As stated on page 58 of

the Master Plan, “This plan recommends that the Township rezone the area from industrial use to age restricted housing in order to address the Township’s need for housing for the elderly . . . “

However, the Planning Board never recommended the rezoning of this property to the Township Council because the owners of the property argued that the history of industrial use of this property and the possibility of contamination made it unsuitable for residential use. Based upon environmental concerns brought to light by the owners of the property, the Planning Board determined not to proceed with the zoning of this property for age-restricted housing.

The result of this site not being designated for age-restricted housing leaves a gap in what the Planning Board determined to be the amount of age-restricted housing that is appropriate in the Township. This is unfortunate because the amount of vacant land that is appropriate to support such housing is dwindling.

For years the Planning Board and members of the governing body have been asked when market priced housing for those 55 and over will be constructed in North Brunswick. Many families who lived and grew up in North Brunswick have had to leave the Township to find appropriate housing to meet their needs as they reach 55 years of age and over. It has been unfortunate, and continues to be today, that no age-restricted market priced housing has been constructed. Most communities of North Brunswick’s size have one or more age-restricted communities that their residents can choose to move into when they need to downsize and can no longer keep up with the maintenance on their homes. Unfortunately, no such housing has come to fruition in North Brunswick.

While it appeared that such housing would finally materialize after the approval of the Cascades development, a softening of the housing market resulted in the project not moving forward. As a result, there is still no market priced age-restricted housing in North Brunswick today, even though this age cohort continues to be one of the fastest growing in the Township.

The Planning Board encourages the Council to take whatever steps it can to facilitate the construction of this much needed age-restricted housing. Given the removal of the Treumann site from consideration for such housing, consideration should be given to allowing such housing to be constructed on infill properties that do not adjoin incompatible uses such as factories, warehouses and automobile yards.

The softening of the housing market did not have a corresponding result of slowing down the aging of the Township’s population. As a result, the need

for market priced age-restricted housing in the Township is stronger today than it has ever been. Any and all steps should be taken to facilitate provision of this housing type, as it is the one housing type in the Township that is completely lacking. Addressing this housing need should be a top priority of the Planning Board and Township Council.