

TO: Municipality of Princeton Planning Board
FROM: M. McKinley Mertz, PP, AICP, LEED Green Associate
RE: Area in Need of Redevelopment Study
Franklin Avenue
Summary Memorandum
DATE: October 5, 2021



Purpose

The August 13, 2021 “Area in Need of Redevelopment Study Franklin Avenue” (“AINOR Study”) reviews Lots 2, 26, and 27 in Block 21.04 to determine if they qualify as an “area in need of redevelopment”.

Background and Existing Conditions

- All three property are on Franklin Avenue between Witherspoon Street and Jefferson Road
- Lot 27 is a surface parking lot in the R4A Residential Zone
- Lots 2 and 26 are developed with buildings managed by Princeton Housing Authority in the AH-6 Affordable Housing Zone.
- The entire study area is in the AHO-6 Affordable Housing Overlay-6 Zone (see p. 16-17)

Analysis of Redevelopment Criteria (begins on p. 20)

- All three properties in the Study Area are recommended for designation under criterion ‘d’
“Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community.”
- Lot 27 (pp. 25-31)
 - Lot 27 is a surface parking lot that previously served the hospital, which has not been in operating at this location for about nine years, leaving the lot obsolete and consistently parked well under capacity as seen in historic aerial imagery on pages 25 to 26 of the AINOR Study.
 - The parking lot shows signs of disrepair with unkept paving, wheel stops that are no longer secured, and graffiti on the pavement.
 - The lot is characterized by excessive impervious coverage. The zoning allows for 80% impervious where the site is near 100% (per visual inspection of the site). Princeton’s Land Use Engineer confirmed there are no on-site catch basins or other stormwater management

infrastructure to help control the flow of water. The site was developed as a parking lot over 60 years ago without modern stormwater quality best management practices that are required under current regulations.

- Lot 26 (pp. 32-40) and Lot 2 (pp.41-47)
 - Lot 26 is developed with Franklin Terrace, a 10-unit residential development constructed in 1938. Lot 2 is developed with 10 affordable units that were constructed in the 1940s. The development is known as Maple Terrace. The units are identical in size and layout in both developments, so the conclusions are the same.
 - The sites are obsolete due to their faulty arrangement and design and antiquated layout. Each apartment measures 489 square feet (as measured by the Housing Authority) and consists of one or two bedrooms, a kitchen, living space, a linen closet, and a bathroom. This unit size does not meet acceptable modern standards for a one- or two-bedroom unit. As a point of reference, the Housing Mortgage and Finance Agency offers financing for gut rehabilitation of units. Such units must meet minimum standards to qualify: 600 square feet for a one-bedroom and 800 square feet for a two-bedroom. The units would not qualify for funding and their undersized nature contributes to the deleterious layout and detrimental impact to those living there.
 - The kitchen outlets that were viewed during the site visit do not have ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), which, in accordance with the National Electric Code should be placed in all kitchens and bathrooms.
 - There are no ADA accessible units as all require at least one step to get into the unit.
 - Signs of disrepair were witnessed throughout the site visits, including crumbling and cracked ceilings and walls, and rotted baseboards.
 - The Housing Authority indicated the units do not lend themselves to modern upgrades including public Wi-Fi, an endeavor that was investigated at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Lot 26 is a component of the town's affordable housing settlement agreement with Fair Share Housing Center. The current configuration does not lend itself to providing the 80 required affordable units.

Conclusion

The AINOR Study concludes that all three lots can be designated under criterion 'd' and recommends that the Municipal Council and Planning Board take the necessary steps to designate the Study Area as an area in need of redevelopment.

The appendix includes the resolution directing the Study (Resolution 20-237), tax data for all three lots, zoning regulations, and historic deeds and documents for all three lots confirming ownership and development history.

Should you have any questions about the above memo, please do not hesitate to contact me.