

III. Community Facilities Plan

Introduction

The Township of Bloomfield is entering a period of renewed growth and stability characterized by the revitalization of commercial districts, redevelopment of significant vacant tracts, infrastructure renewal and population gains. This trend is expected to continue into the future because of major initiatives such as the revitalization of Bloomfield Center, redevelopment of Westinghouse and commencement of MidTOWN Direct service to Manhattan by NJ Transit. There have been many changes since the 1989 Master Plan, however, Bloomfield has maintained its character as a desirable community with established residential neighborhoods, convenient shopping areas and an outstanding quality of life. One of the most significant factors influencing the Township's quality of life is the availability and high quality of community facilities. These facilities include schools, libraries, emergency services, the municipal complex and a civic center. Community facilities have a direct relationship to the adequacy of public services and, therefore, to the quality of life experienced by residents, workers and visitors. The Community Facilities Plan recognizes the importance of community facilities and the contribution that they make to the Township's reputation as a good place to live and work.

The Township of Bloomfield has a large system of community facilities befitting its status as a major suburban center and one of the larger municipalities in Essex County. Bloomfield's community facilities make an important contribution to the quality of life and are generally adequate to serve existing residents, businesses and visitors. There are, however, facilities that are aging and in need of improvement. The 1989 Master Plan and 1995 Reexamination Report contained the goal of "Maintaining a high standard of community services by improving and maintaining facilities so that the Township is efficiently and adequately served." This recommendation remains valid and is addressed in the sections that follow.

The Community Facilities Plan identifies existing public facilities and evaluates future needs as well as proposed or planned facilities. The information utilized in this Plan has been obtained from the Planning Board, Township officials, public hearings and the Master Plan Committee.

Schools

The Township of Bloomfield has a relatively large and well-established public school system with a broad range of academic and extra-curricular programs. Bloomfield's school system has experienced significant growth during the past ten years characterized by increased enrollment, expansion of existing facilities and the introduction of new programs. The school system currently has 11 facilities consisting of 8 primary schools, 2 intermediate schools and 1 high school,

as shown in Table III-1. In addition, Essex County operates a Vocational School for students seeking a technical education and workforce training. The schools are located in neighborhoods throughout the Township, which reflects its character as a mature, fully developed community with a dense pattern of residential development.

Township Public School Facilities

The Township of Bloomfield's public school system was constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when the Township was experiencing rapid development and population growth. As shown in Table III-1, the majority of Bloomfield's schools were constructed between 1891 and 1932 and have an average age of 77 years. Many schools, however, have been expanded and renovated over the years to meet the changing needs of the student population and support curriculum advancements.

Table III-1 Public Schools, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ			
School	Address	Grades	Year Constructed
<i>Primary</i>			
Berkeley School	351 Bloomfield Avenue	Pre-K to 6	1891
Brookdale School	1230 Broad Street	K to 6	1909
Carteret School	158 Grove Street	K to 6	1914
Demarest School	465 Broughton Avenue	K to 6	1932
Fairview School	376 Berkeley Avenue	K to 6	1899
Franklin School	85 Curtis Street	Pre-K to 6	1926
Oak View School	150 Garrabrant Avenue	Pre-K to 6	1952
Watsessing School	71 Prospect Street	K to 6	1899
<i>Intermediate</i>			
Bloomfield Middle School	60 Huck Road	7 to 8	1959
Forest Glen School	280 Davey Street	7 to 12	1957
<i>Secondary</i>			
Bloomfield High School	160 Broad Street	9 to 12	1911
<i>Source: Board of Education, Township of Bloomfield</i>			

Bloomfield has eight (8) primary schools that enroll students in kindergarten through grade 6 (K to 6). The primary schools operate as neighborhood schools that serve the Township’s various residential areas. There are two schools, Carteret School and Watsessing School, located in the southern section of the Township below Bloomfield Avenue. Four schools are located in the central section of Bloomfield between Watchung Avenue and Bloomfield Avenue; Berkeley School, Demarest School, Fairview School and Franklin School. There are also two schools, Brookdale School and Oak View School, located north of Watchung Avenue. The schools were constructed from 1891 to 1952, as shown in Table III-1.

Bloomfield has two intermediate schools consisting of Bloomfield Middle School and Forest Glen School. Bloomfield Middle School enrolls students in grades 7 to 8 and Forest Glen School enrolls students in grades 7 to 12. They were constructed in 1959 and 1957 respectively, as shown in Table III-1.

Bloomfield has one secondary school, Bloomfield High School, that serves the entire Township. The High School enrolls students in grades 9 to 12 and is located on Broad Street in the central section of the Township. It was constructed in 1911, as shown in Table III-1.

Facility Improvements

The Township of Bloomfield school district has implemented a number of facility improvements to meet the changing needs of students and the community. Many of the improvements were approved and funded by a \$13 million building referendum passed by Township voters in November, 1998. As shown in Table III-2, these improvements include building renovations and expansion for new classrooms. They are intended to upgrade aging facilities and accommodate enrollment growth, curriculum requirements and new programs.

The most significant improvements underway in the Bloomfield school district are classroom renovations and building expansions to create additional classroom and program space. Such improvements have recently been completed for the Berkeley School, Bloomfield Middle School, Carteret School, Fairview School, Franklin School, Oak View School and Watsessing School. Other completed improvements include upgrading windows and mechanical systems.

Enrollment Trends

Over the past 10 years, the Township of Bloomfield school district has experienced a significant increase in enrollment. The number of students attending public school increased from 4,487 in the 1990-1991 school year to 6,005 in the 2000-2001 school year as shown in Table III-3. This represents enrollment growth of 1,518 students or 33.8 percent during the decade. The increase in enrollment has occurred at all grade levels, however, it is most pronounced in kindergarten through grade 8 (K to 8). This is primarily the result of the demographic trend

Table III-2 Public School Improvements, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ		
School	Improvements	Completion Date
Berkeley School	Window replacement, sprinkler installation, renovations for additional classrooms	2000
Bloomfield High School	Corridor resurfacing, ceiling tile replacement, upgrade of P.A. system, painting, TV studio upgrade	2001
Bloomfield Middle School	Library expansion, classroom addition, new cafeteria	2001
Brookdale School	Window replacement	2000
Carteret School	Window replacement, building addition	2000
Fairview School	Window replacement, sprinkler installation, renovations to third floor classrooms	1999
Franklin School	Window replacement, classroom renovation	2000
Oak View School	Window replacement, building addition	2001
Watsessing School	Window replacement, sprinkler installation, renovation to third floor for additional classrooms.	2000
<i>Source: Board of Education, Township of Bloomfield</i>		

known as the “baby boom echo.” This refers to adults born between 1946 and 1964, who are in their prime child-bearing years, and whose children are enrolled in the lower grade levels. This trend is expected to continue over the course of the next several years. In order to accommodate enrollment growth at the elementary level, several primary schools are being renovated and expanded. Other schools have reopened the upper floor(s) of buildings that had been closed decades ago in order to create additional classroom and program space.

Projected Enrollment

The Township of Bloomfield's school system is projected to experience continued enrollment growth over the next several years. Current enrollment for the 2000-2001 school year is 6,005. This is projected to increase to 6,233 students in 2001-2002, as shown in Table III-4. This represents a gain of 228 students or 3.8 percent during the next year. Projected enrollment for 2003-2004 is 6,625, which represents an increase of 620 students or 10.3 percent

Table III-3 School Enrollment Trends, 1990 to 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ			
		Change, Year to Year	
Year	Enrollment	Number	Percent
1990-1991	4,487	---	---
1991-1992	4,497	10	0.2
1992-1993	4,607	110	2.4
1993-1994	4,775	168	3.6
1994-1995	4,843	68	1.4
1995-1996	4,814	-29	-0.6
1996-1997	5,030	216	4.5
1997-1998	5,242	212	4.2
1998-1999	5,681	439	8.4
1999-2000	5,851	170	2.9
2000-2001	6,005	154	2.6
Change, 1990-2001	---	1,518	33.8

Source: Board of Education, Township of Bloomfield

over current enrollment of 6,005. Additional enrollment increases are anticipated beyond 2003-2004 as a result of in-fill development, residential redevelopment, housing turnover and an increase in the school-age population resulting from the “baby boom echo.”

Table III-4 Projected School Enrollment, 2001 to 2004 Township of Bloomfield, NJ			
		Change, 2001-02 to 2003-04	
Year	Enrollment	Number	Percent
2001-2002	6,233	--	--
2002-2003	6,435	202	3.2
2003-2004	6,625	190	2.9

Source: Board of Education, Township of Bloomfield

Future Needs

The Township of Bloomfield's school system has addressed enrollment growth and classroom capacity at the lower grade levels, however, there is a need to accommodate enrollment growth at the High School. The High School is currently near capacity due to enrollment growth, curriculum changes, new programs and revised classroom space standards. This growth is projected to continue as the increased number of students at lower grade levels progress through the school system, further exacerbating the capacity limitations of the High School. The school district is currently evaluating methods of increasing classroom and program space at the High School, although no decisions have been made regarding future actions. The Board of Education has identified the need for a 65,000 square foot addition and increased parking¹. It is recommended that future plans to expand or renovate the High School be coordinated with the Township, particularly with regard to land use, community facilities and parking.

Other school needs that must be addressed in the future include athletic facilities at the High School, limited playground space at older elementary schools and parking for faculty, staff and students at school facilities.

Essex County Vocational-Technical School

The Township of Bloomfield is host to a branch facility of the Essex County Vocational-Technical Schools District known as the Bloomfield Technical Center. The Technical Center is a secondary school for grades 9 to 12 that is located at 209 Franklin Avenue. It provides students from Bloomfield and other municipalities in the County with occupational and academic instruction to prepare them to enter the workforce or pursue a post-secondary education. Occupational programs include shop, automotive, computer assisted drafting/design, electronics, graphic arts and robotics. Academic programs are college and technical school preparatory and have an emphasis on math and science. The Bloomfield Technical Center has a current 2000-2001 enrollment of 457 and projected future enrollment of 485.² According to the District, there are no plans to expand existing facilities or create new facilities at the Technical Center.

Private Schools

The Township of Bloomfield's public school system is complemented by numerous private schools that provide a broad range of educational instruction and programs for children and their families. As shown in Table III-5, there are 5 private academic elementary and secondary schools in the Township. They provide an alternative to the public schools for families who desire a

¹ According to representatives of the school district.

² Information from the Essex County Vocational-Technical Schools District.

Table III-5 Private Schools, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ	
School	Address
Brookdale Christian School	Broad Street and Mountain Avenue
Disciple Christian Academy	40 West Passaic Avenue
Rainbow Montessori School	1255 Broad Street
Sacred Heart School	683 Bloomfield Avenue
St. Thomas the Apostle School	60 Byrd Avenue
<i>Source: Township of Bloomfield</i>	

specialized or religiously-oriented education. The Township’s private schools also provide additional educational capacity, which is especially important in light of recent public school enrollment growth and limited classroom space.

Library Facilities

The Township of Bloomfield Public Library has facilities located in the central section of the Township to serve residents, schoolchildren and visitors. As shown in Table III-6, the Bloomfield library system consists of an Adult and Children’s Library complex that is located at 90 Broad Street. The Public Library has indicated that both structures are in need of repairs, structural improvements and new mechanical systems.

Table III-6 Public Library Facilities, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ	
Facility	Address
Adult Library	90 Broad Street
Children's Library	90 Broad Street
<i>Source: Bloomfield Public Library</i>	

The Public Library is one of Bloomfield’s major educational and cultural facilities. In addition to its book collection, the Adult and Children’s Library provide a broad range of educational and cultural programs. The administration of the Public Library has identified the need for upgraded wiring to accommodate high technology applications increasingly utilized in modern library operations.

The Bloomfield Public Library has an extensive collection of books, newspaper and periodicals and electronic media as shown in Table III-7. The collection currently consists of 131,093 book titles and 181,216 book volumes; 548

Table III-7 Public Library Collection, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ	
Category	Number
Book titles	131,093
Book volumes	181,216
Periodicals and newspapers	548
Audio-visual materials	10,350
Electronic materials	56
Circulation	116,572
<i>Source: 1999 Public Library Statistical Report, Bloomfield Public Library</i>	

periodicals and newspapers; and 10,350 audio-visual materials and 56 electronic media. The Township’s Public Library has a total annual circulation of approximately 116,572.

The Bloomfield Public Library provides numerous services to the community in addition to its basic function as a place to read, conduct research and borrow books. The Library has a meeting room for the use of community groups. It also provides computers and internet access to residents of the Township. In addition, the Public Library has reciprocal borrowing agreements with municipal libraries throughout Essex County. This provides expanded access to books, periodicals and other library holdings. Bloomfield also benefits from the new Bloomfield College Library, which is a first-rate collegiate facility available to residents of the Township.

Fire Department Facilities

The Township of Bloomfield is a mature, fully developed community with diverse residential neighborhoods, multiple commercial districts and industrial areas that require fire protection. As a result, Bloomfield has an extensive network of fire facilities and a broad range of equipment to serve residents, businesses and visitors. There are 4 fire stations with various types of fire fighting apparatus as shown in Table III-8. These facilities are geographically distributed so that every section of the Township is within 1.5

miles of a fire station, providing outstanding coverage. This standard is used in assessing fire protection systems by the National Board of Fire Underwriters.

Table III-8 Fire Department Facilities, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ			
Facility	Address	Year Constructed	Apparatus
Fire Headquarters	375 Franklin Street	1930	750 gal./1,500 g.p.m. pumper, 110 foot aerial ladder
Station Two (2)	90 Watsessing Avenue	1975	750 gal./1,500 g.p.m. pumper, 500 gal./1,000 g.p.m. spare pumper, 100 foot spare aerial ladder
Station Three (3)	124 E. Passaic Avenue	1937	500 gal./1,250 g.p.m. pumper, heavy rescue vehicle
Station Four (4)	1233 Broad Street	1951	500 gal./1,500 g.p.m./75 foot aerial quint, 500 gallon/1,000 g.p.m. spare pumper
<i>Source: Bloomfield Fire Department</i>			

Bloomfield’s Fire Department is a full-time professional force that provides 24 hour service and fire protection. In addition to local fire protection services, the Township maintains several mutual aid agreements with adjacent municipalities. These include the adjacent communities of Belleville, East Orange, Glen Ridge, Montclair, Newark and Nutley. In the event of an emergency, the Bloomfield Fire Department provides coverage and fire fighting assistance in these communities as requested.

The majority of Bloomfield’s Fire Department facilities, or 75 percent, were constructed prior to 1952. However, they are in relatively good condition and are maintained through the Township capital program and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Fire fighting apparatus are replaced according to the Fire Department’s vehicle replacement plan, which averages one apparatus every three years. This has enabled the Department to respond to emergency calls, which have increased from 1,875 in 1995 to 2,649 in 1999. This represents an increase of 774 calls or 41.3 percent during the past 5 years.

Police Department Facilities

The Township of Bloomfield Police Department is responsible for law enforcement and public safety throughout the Township’s diverse residential neighborhoods, multiple commercial districts, industrial areas and busy roadway corri-

Table III-9 Police Department Facilities, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ	
Facility	Location
Law Enforcement Building	1 Municipal Plaza
<i>Source: Bloomfield Police Department</i>	

dors. The Police Department provides services to residents as well as the thousands of employees and visitors who work or pass through the Township each day. The Department operates from a centralized facility known as the Law Enforcement Building, as shown in Table III-9. This facility is considered adequate by the Police Chief to meet the needs of the Township, Department and officers. The only planned improvement is the remodeling of the cell block and booking area which is scheduled to begin in 2001.

Volunteer Emergency Squad

The Township of Bloomfield has a volunteer Emergency Squad that operates from a facility at the rear of the Township Building at 1 Municipal Plaza. The Emergency Squad facility includes three (3) bays for vehicles, an operations area, conference room and living quarters. The Squad has three (3) vehicles at present, one of which is scheduled for replacement. There is a long-term need to expand the Emergency Squad facility to accommodate larger vehicles.

Table III-10 Other Municipal Facilities, 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ		
Building	Location	Facilities
Municipal Building	Municipal Plaza	Council Chambers, Mayor's Office, Administrative offices
Civic Center	84 Broad Street	Administrative offices, Recreation space
Public Works Building	230 Grove Street, 13 Race Street	Offices, repair shop, storage yard
Oakside Cultural Center	240 Belleville Avenue	Meeting rooms, grounds
Animal Shelter	61 Shelter Place	Animal shelter
<i>Source: 1989 Master Plan, Bloomfield Township</i>		

Municipal Facilities

The Township of Bloomfield owns and operates several facilities used to support daily government activities and functions, as shown in Table III-10. The most prominent of these facilities is the Municipal Building located at Municipal Plaza between Bloomfield Avenue and Franklin Street. It adjoins the U.S Post Office, Law Enforcement Building and Fire Department Headquarters to form a large public and government complex. Other significant municipal facilities are the Civic Center on Broad Street opposite the Green, the Oakeside Cultural Center on Belleville Avenue, the Public Works building on Grove and Race Streets and the Animal Shelter. These are dispersed throughout the Township. It is recommended that the Township work to increase public access to and use of the Oakeside Cultural Center in recognition of its importance as a community asset.

Recommendations

1. Maintain and upgrade existing Township buildings as funding becomes available.
2. Coordinate planning with the Board of Education to address enrollment growth and capacity constraints at Township schools, especially Bloomfield High School.
3. Assist the Board of Education in providing adequate athletic fields and parking to serve existing schools, possibly through joint use of such facilities.
4. Maintain existing library facilities and seek State and foundation grant funding to improve program space, increase holdings and incorporate new technology.
5. Maintain existing Fire Department facilities and apparatus.
6. Maintain existing Police Department facilities and consider, where appropriate, new facilities and/or equipment to support the community policing program.
7. Maintain the existing Volunteer Emergency Squad facility and equipment.
8. Improve and consolidate the Department of Public Works facilities at or near the new building on 13 Race Street. Consider residential reuse of the facility at 230 Grove Street in light of its proximity to the Grove Street Station of the Newark City Subway.
9. Maintain the existing Civic Center and explore upgrades as funding becomes available.
10. Increase public use of, and access to, the Oakeside Cultural Center for Township programs, events and activities.