

Draft 2010 Nassau County Master Plan
Comments by the Kimmel Housing Development Foundation
On the Housing Section
Presented to the Nassau County Planning Commission
November 18, 2010
By Patricia Bourne*

On behalf of the Kimmel Housing Development Foundation, I want to commend the Nassau County Planning Commission members, staff of the Nassau County Planning Department and the consultants for the 2010 Draft Master Plan. It is an ambitious report. In order to help shape the future of this county, it is critical to have an updated plan. The draft plan has an emphasis on economic growth, rental and workforce housing options, in transit oriented downtowns.

The Kimmel Foundation has been developing affordable housing since 1995. The foundation currently has two rental buildings for low income residents in New Cassel.

As the emerging economy requires all of us to adjust to new ways of operating, we would like to suggest the Planning Commission and staff consider these 5 points regarding housing to be included in the final Master Plan:

1. Need for rental housing for low income Nassau County residents.

The Kimmel Foundation's Apex I and II Buildings in New Cassel are examples of how this can work. We serve families and seniors with incomes less than 50% of the Area Median Income. This housing was made possible with financial support from the federal, state, county and town governments.

2. Need for housing for veterans, especially single parents with children, currently returning from service.

From the US Census, we estimate that approximately 4% of the Nassau County population is veterans under 65 years of age. County housing groups have seen an increasing need from single parents with children for housing. In County Executive Mangano's 2010 State of the County Address, he cited this as a priority. The model of a Community Land Trust would allow the land to be held in common with community involvement, thereby helping to preserve the priorities of affordability,

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being owner occupied and maintenance of the property to conform to community standards.

3. Need for programs to fund energy efficiency in non-profit housing, especially multifamily housing.

Federal and state energy policies ignore the needs of non profit multi family housing. Funding through tax credits is available to the for-profit sector and there are programs for single family homeowners. Encouraging funding for this sector will not only meet environmental goals, but also help low income populations pay for the increasing costs of energy in their homes.

4. Need for effective coordination of housing agencies and programs to promote the best affordable housing possible.

An example is the leadership of New York State to bring all programs under one roof, led by Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner Brian Lawlor. Housing development is complex with many specialties. Having all programs coordinated, allows everything from tax credits to Main Street (downtown) programs to be in one place.

5. Better understanding and use of social media to reach out to communities in the earliest stages of the development process for affordable housing.

Social media is increasingly being discussed for use in affordable housing land use and development transactions. It does not take the place of the traditional methods of community outreach and decision making, but can not be ignored as an important tool.

*Until 2009, Patricia Bourne was the Executive Commissioner of the Nassau County Planning Commission.