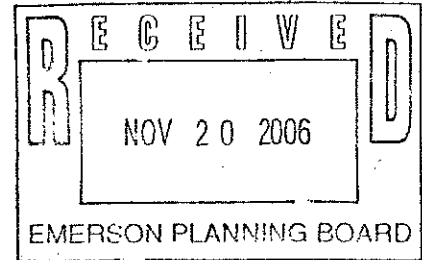


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COUNTY OF BERGEN
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Dennis McNerney
County Executive

Farouk Ahmad, P.E.
Department Director

October 27, 2006

Mayor Steven Setteducati
Emerson Borough Council
Borough of Emerson
Municipal Place
Emerson, NJ 07630

Dear Mayor Setteducati and Council Members:

For two decades, Bergen County has been working diligently to make the necessary improvements to Kinderkamack Road, a critical artery in the Pascack Valley tier of the County.

These improvements have sought to improve traffic flow along this County Road, while remaining sensitive to the communities through which it passes and the different roles it plays. Depending on the host municipality, Kinderkamack is alternately a commuter conduit, a downtown "main street", an access point for commuter rail and bus transit, and a commercial traffic route accessing local businesses.

Recognizing the importance of this County Road, the Bergen County Department of Planning and Economic Development sought to study further improvements in the interest of Pascack Valley communities, in the *Kinderkamack Road/Pascack Valley Intermodal Corridor Study*. The goal of this study was to comprise a blueprint of implementable improvements that would improve corridor operations for all users, while remaining sensitive to the context of the communities through which the road passes.

Representatives from all communities along the corridor were invited to participate in a Technical Advisory Committee for this Study. As such, many towns sent their elected officials, administrators, engineers, planners, and police personnel to lend their local expertise and concerns over the corridor. Emerson was invited to the three Technical Advisory Committee meetings – attending only one of these – as well as the public meeting and open house on this project. Unfortunately, despite repeated invitations, Emerson's participation in the study was sparse, and no specific comments on the relationship between this project and the Redevelopment Plan were received.

This was especially unfortunate, as our initial feeling on a starting point for the study was, in fact, to focus on the railroad crossing at Kinderkamack Road located in the immediate vicinity of the Emerson Station, given the challenges presented by – and redevelopment potential inherent in – this location.

Now, the Department of Planning is learning more about Emerson's redevelopment activities here through the *Bergen Record*, as opposed to direct communication between the County and elected officials of your Borough.

Our records indicate that there has been no outreach whatsoever on the part of Borough representatives regarding any Borough-sponsored meetings on the Redevelopment Plan. Further, following the article in the Record that outlined my disappointment with the activities here, the Mayor's attempts to reach me have been disingenuous. Given the time of calls - late in the day - and an instance in which the Mayor's call was transferred to me, but appeared as a deliberate hang-up, these do not appear to me as genuine attempts to reach out to myself and my staff. We have attempted to return his calls at other times during the day, to no avail.

With regard to some of the Mayor's other comments, talking to an area planner who deals in the specifics of site plan and subdivision review for individual development applications does not represent a genuine and serious attempt to communicate with myself and my staff for a project on a regional redevelopment scale.

With all of this as a backdrop, Emerson's lack of communication with the County regarding its activities here will likely spell disaster for the future of any redevelopment proposal. Kinderkamack Road is, after all, a County-owned and maintained facility and our jurisdiction here will require sign-off for any proposed changes within its right-of-way.

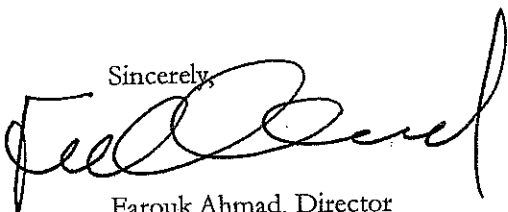
By not including the County as a key stakeholder from the onset of redevelopment planning, Emerson has not only failed to avail itself of the Department of Planning's regional planning and development expertise, but it has failed to bring the Borough to the table as far as the County's future plans on Kinderkamack Road.

In the past, when a town's leadership believes in a project, and is genuinely interested in improving conditions and benefiting their town, they bring themselves to the table. They reach out and participate fervently. The transformation of Edgewater, with its redevelopment and River Road improvements, is certainly a testimony to our past successes.

Like River Road in Edgewater, Kinderkamack Road will be the lifeblood of any future redevelopment here. It is the main corridor providing access to your downtown, and the businesses within this district. It is my hope that Emerson will stop planning in a vacuum, and consider the bigger picture here.

Unfortunately, due to your lack of participation, Phase II of our study, as well as future work on the Kinderkamack Road corridor, will focus on locations where municipal representatives have shown a genuine interest and active participation in our projects.

Sincerely,



Farouk Ahmad, Director
Bergen County Department of Planning & Economic Development