

Municipal Monitor

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NEXUS Municipal Monitor: March 2025

NEXUS Legislative Committee Meets with Mayors of Burlington Township & City of Camden to Discuss Issues Related to Real Estate & Development

In January and February, members of the NEXUS Legislative Committee met with Burlington Township Mayor Pete Green and Camden City Mayor Vic Carstarphen, respectively, to discuss real estate and development issues in their municipalities. The following is an overview of the key issues discussed.

Burlington Township Update – Insights from Mayor Pete Green

Burlington Township (population ~25,000) is undergoing significant transformation with many key projects and initiatives that will affect housing, development, and community life underway. Mayor Green opened the meeting detailing the new residential housing that has recently been completed or is soon to open, including:

- **The Place at Burlington:**
 - A newly completed 84-unit affordable rental community adjacent to the Capital Crossing townhouse development, located at Salem Road and John F. Kennedy Way.
- **Rancocas Pointe at Burlington:**
 - This 140-unit apartment complex on Rancocas Road includes 28 affordable units. Developed by DR Horton on a 14-acre site, it features recreational trails with the first certificate of occupancy expected in January 2025.
- **Bromley Blvd. Development:**
 - A large-scale project by J Centra Burlington and Jefferson Apartment Group featuring 500 mixed units (including 100 affordable) across 20 buildings. Amenities include clubhouses, pools, pickleball and basketball courts, and a dog park. Anticipated first occupancy is Spring 2025.
- **Spectrum Way:**
 - Set to break ground in summer 2025, this project will deliver 140 apartment units (28 of which are affordable).

The mayor also discussed additional projects, including the sale and repurposing the Burlington Coat Factory store into a community food bank and other vacant properties into community assets. He shared that the township needs only 50 more affordable units to reach a target of 208 by 2035 and that the Council was slated for January 21 vote on the plan, ahead of the January 31 deadline set by the state. Mayor Green also shared that despite all the ongoing development, local property taxes have remained stable for two decades and that recent voter-approved referendums for school repairs and new turf fields promise smooth transitions in debt service and sustained fiscal health.

Like neighboring municipalities, Burlington has been grappling with the development of warehouses. To ensure a community-centric approach, the Township is enacting proactive measures like restrictions on overnight truck parking and speed humps to help mitigate traffic concerns. Direct, face-to-face engagement with both residents and vendors remain a cornerstone of the township's approach to protect quality of life. For example, Subaru's large warehouse in the township only has 33 workers on a single shift so the impact is minimal. Drawing in more of that kind of development is the township's goal, underscoring Burlington Township's commitment to smart growth—balancing housing needs, commercial development, and community well-being.

City of Camden Update—Presentation by Mayor Vic Carstarphen

Mayor Carstarphen reviewed significant progress in the city, including a 75% reduction in homicides since 2012 when they transitioned to the Camden County Police Department, leading to a 55-year low in crime.

Since 2021, more than 280 roads have been paved **citywide**, representing 12.42 miles or 8% of the total road surfaces. An additional 63 roads will be paved in 2025. Over \$23 million has been invested in roadway improvements during the past 4-year period, more than any other time

over the past 50 years.

This work and investment set the stage for future development. Challenges remain, such as attracting grocery stores and addressing affordable housing needs.

Two projects will transform the gateway into NJ and spark even more new development in Camden.

Walter Rand Transportation Center - \$250 million State dollars are committed to rebuild the Center, turning it into a 21st-century hub for the city and region.

Camden to Glassboro train line - a 1.8-billion-dollar investment in public transportation.

Improving Camden's finances and attracting investments.

- Mayor highlighted their improved bond rating. In 2021, the city upgraded to an A Minus. In 2024, they received a third upgrade in a decade to an A rating with a “stable outlook” by S&P.
- Home to the Eds and Meds. Cooper University Health Care has announced a \$3 billion expansion of its main campus.

Quality housing is at the heart of a vibrant and healthy community, and a key indicator for success.

- In May 2024 report, Axios analyzed data from Zillow. They found the top three zip codes with the greatest home appreciation in the Philadelphia metro area are in the City of Camden. The City’s market rate prices are up 40% since last year, while maintaining the lowest average property taxes in NJ.
- New affordable housing development is coming:
 - North Gate One in North Camden - \$130 million dollar renovation
 - Ablett Village - \$165 million dollar redevelopment
 - The Harrison in Cramer Hill
 - Oliver Station in Whitman Park - \$24 million-dollar mixed-use affordable housing and healthcare facility near the Ferry Avenue PATCO Station and will be the first of this kind in South Jersey.
- Collaboration with residents, faith leaders, and organizations is crucial for success.
- The demand for housing demonstrates that public safety improvements and investment in neighborhoods are resulting in real change.
- Camden's waterfront view is beautiful, and young people are moving there for affordable housing options.
- Camden is focusing on market-rate housing in different areas, including 21st Street, to attract professionals.

Development, education, and special services for youth.

- The city has a lot of open space parking, which presents opportunities for development.
- The community needs to continue to grow and create opportunities for home ownership and redevelopment.
- The Mayor discussed their efforts to support local youth and improve their community through mentorship and service.
- The Mayor emphasized the importance of understanding one's purpose and identity in order to effectively serve others.
- The Mayor highlighted the need for special services in Camden, including autism support and teacher training.

Revitalizing with community centers, grocery stores, and housing.

- Repurposing old schools as community opportunity centers with medical and educational partnerships.
- Camden needs more housing for the disabled community.
- Community efforts to address food desert, with new grocery store.
- Collaboration with Sprout to bring expansion and good opportunities to the area.

Two New Legislators Representing South Jersey Sworn into General Assembly

In 2025, Burlington and Camden counties welcomed two new legislators to the General Assembly. **Balvir Singh**—an experienced public-school educator of over 20 years and former Burlington County Commissioner—now represents legislative district 7, succeeding **Dr. Herb Conaway**, who moved on to serve in Congress as the representative for the 3rd District. Meanwhile, Camden County Commissioner and Gold Star Mother **Melinda Kane** has taken office as the Assemblywoman from the 6th legislative district, replacing **Pam Lampitt**, who left the Assembly to assume the role of Camden County Clerk, a position she secured in the November election.

Burlington County

Bordentown City Moves Municipal Elections from May to November

Bordentown City will now hold its non-partisan municipal elections in November instead of May. City Commissioners unanimously approved Ordinance 2025-01—reflecting voter sentiment from November 2024—to make this change starting with the 2025 election. The City Commission government and non-partisan election format remain unchanged.

Construction of 375-unit Apartment Building at Moorestown Mall to Begin

Construction of The Pearl, a 375-unit apartment building, at the Moorestown Mall is set to get underway in the coming weeks. The project is part of a long-term strategy to repurpose the mall into a vibrant community hub that combines retail, dining, entertainment, medical services, and residential living. The Pearl will be located on the lot adjacent to Boscov's, facing Lenola Road. Construction has already begun on the parking garage and subsurface work, and vertical construction of the seven-story building is next.

Willingboro Voters Consider School Referendum on March 11

Willingboro Township will hold a special election on March 11 to decide on a \$67.9 million renovation and new construction plan for its public schools. Under the proposal, the state will contribute \$21 million, with the remainder funded by local taxpayers. A virtual town hall meeting was held on February 12 to review the plans, and a recording is available online here: <https://sites.google.com/wboe.net/willingboro-township-publicsc/home>

The referendum is split into two parts:

- Question 1 (\$49.7 million): This measure focuses on increasing classroom space, modernizing academic and physical education facilities, and addressing key maintenance needs. Planned projects include renovating science labs at the middle and high schools, converting elementary libraries into modern media centers, adding gym annexes at elementary schools, installing bathrooms in every preschool/kindergarten classroom, and improving safety and traffic flow in the parking lot at Garfield East Early Childhood Development Center.
- Question 2 (\$18.2 million): This measure would fund an indoor track and basketball complex at Windover Lane, next to the Country Club Administration building. The facility would feature a six-lane banked track with additional sprint lanes, designated areas for jumping and pole vaulting, and two indoor basketball courts. This project does not receive state funding; school officials plan to supplement costs through rentals and sponsorships.

For a typical home assessed at \$161,022, Question 1 would result in a tax increase of about \$14 per month, while both measures together would add approximately \$23 per month.

Camden County

Construction of County Trail System in Camden to Include Area Near Subaru

Camden County's 34-mile LINK trail system will soon extend to include a patch of land near the Subaru of America headquarters and Admiral Wilson Boulevard in Camden. This expansion, part of the River Birch Trail project, is expected to begin in early spring. Once completed, the LINK trail will stretch through 17 municipalities—from the Ben Franklin Bridge in Camden to the Gloucester County line in Winslow Township. A video showcasing the Camden portion of the LINK system, including the River Birch Trail near Subaru, is available for viewing [here](#). The River Birch segment will feature roadway improvements, new landscaping, relocated streetlights, and a newly constructed sidewalk.

Cherry Hill Makes Improvements to Outdoor Spaces

In late January, the Cherry Hill Township Council moved forward with two key outdoor recreation initiatives: the purchase of equipment for the newly designed Sandringham Park in Surrey Place East, and the approval of a contract for the demolition of the remaining structures at the former Kingston Swim Club. The swim club, which had served the community for over 60 years, closed in 2020 due to declining membership, an outstanding loan, and the effects of COVID-19. In the same year, the township purchased the property, demolishing the pools, basketball courts, and other amenities, leaving only the clubhouse and pavilion. The project's long-term vision has remained consistent—transforming the site into an open, grassy, and peaceful recreation area. With the upcoming demolition of the remaining structures, that vision is now within reach. The Township Planning Board also recently adopted an open-space recreation plan that includes planning principles that will help guide Cherry Hill's future conservation and preservation activities over the next decade. The plan was developed based on community input and includes eight key goals:

- To preserve open space for preservation, conservation and/or recreation
 - To preserve sensitive land areas through acquisition of environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, woodlands, aquifer recharge areas and areas containing unique environmental features
 - To preserve and enhance greenways
 - To improve the existing open space system throughout the township and provide adequate passive and active recreation opportunities for all ages
 - To improve maintenance and maximize the use of existing active recreation parcels
 - Promote the importance of and maintenance of passive open space parcels
 - To promote health and wellness through active recreation
 - To balance environmental conservation with economic development
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Pre-Construction on 18-Mile Light Rail Between Glassboro & Camden Expected to Begin in 2025

NJ Transit President Kris Kolluri recently announced at a large business event at Rowan University that pre-construction for an 18-mile light rail line connecting Glassboro and Camden is expected to start by the end of this year. The project, which involves significant upgrades to existing railroad infrastructure, has received mixed reactions from local communities. Residents in several towns—such as Pitman (next to Glassboro), Mantua Township, Woodbury Heights, and Wenonah in Gloucester County, as well as Brooklawn in Camden County—have voted against the project, citing concerns over increased noise, traffic, and potential negative impacts on property values. In contrast, Glassboro residents voted in favor of the project last year, and the City of Camden has not yet held a referendum on it. Kolluri emphasized that the light rail project is a major

Construction of New Supportive Housing Center in Gloucester Township Underway

Camden County, through its Office of Homelessness & Community Development, has begun constructing a new 60-unit transitional supportive housing center on County House Road in the Lakeland complex at Gloucester Township. This facility will provide temporary housing along with on-site staff and services, serving as a hub that connects residents to additional county support such as healthcare and employment assistance. The new building will complement an existing 25-unit facility in another Lakeland building. Both centers are designed to help residents transition to independent living, ensuring that once a resident moves on, their unit can be reassigned to someone else in need.

Ocean County

Jackson Board of Education Votes to Close Middle School Amid Budget Deficit

On February 19, the Jackson Board of Education voted to close one middle school and sue the state over insufficient funding. Under the new plan, all 7th and 8th graders will attend Jackson Memorial High School, while 5th and 6th graders will go to Goetz Middle School, and Liberty High School will serve grades 9–12. These changes aim to address a projected \$13 million budget deficit for the 2025–26 academic year. Initially, the board recommended closing Goetz Middle School, but a title search revealed a "reverter clause" that would force the building to remain in use as a school, so McAuliffe Middle School will be closed instead.

Hearing on Redevelopment Motel in Seaside Heights Moved to March 31

A hearing to consider designating the Cloud 9 Inn at 124 Hamilton Avenue in Seaside Heights as a formal redevelopment area has been postponed to March 31, 2025, at 6 p.m. in the municipal courtroom. At the hearing, the planning board will vote on recommending the redevelopment designation to the borough council. If approved, the borough can develop a plan—implemented by either the current or a new owner, or, if necessary, the property may be condemned and sold—to meet state-mandated criteria. Built in 1984, the motel sits on a 140,000-square-foot parcel spanning two lots behind the former Karma nightclub site, now being redeveloped. Cloud 9 Inn has been under consideration for redevelopment since 2022 due to longstanding code issues and law enforcement concerns.

Point Pleasant Beach Considering Ordinance Limiting Construction Noise

The Borough of Point Pleasant Beach is considering an ordinance designed to restrict commercial construction to reduce noise and enhance residents' quality of life. Under the proposal, construction would be banned on Sundays year-round, on Saturdays between July 1 and Labor Day, federal holidays, along with other time restrictions. The rules do permit an emergency waiver. For full details, please visit

<https://www.pointpleasantbeach.org/DocumentCenter/View/562/Ordinance-2025-05Amend-Ch13-26--27-Construction-Hours--Dates-AS-AMENDED-AFTER-INTRO-BY-TITLE--PUBLIC-HEARING-030425>

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