

## **The Lambertville Community Advisory Team (CAT)'s Commitments During its Next Phase January, 2020**

First, to all those residents who have already participated in our Phase 1 work of meeting the city's affordable housing obligations, we say thank you! Over the course of the last few months, the community joined us as we conducted two surveys (a total of 390 responses), a dozen office hours, and a community-based design vetting meeting for the mixed-income housing to be located at the current police site. Based on this community engagement and meetings with the city planner and environmental experts, we made our recommendations for the redevelopment plan to the City Council on October 6, [2020](#).

We have now begun to lay the groundwork for Phase 2, which will address facility needs. In order to address the shorter timeline needed to relocate the police department and to ensure that we are able to have a longer period of engagement around the City's other facilities, this work will be divided into two segments: (a) police relocation and (b) addressing other facility needs. Phase 2A, police relocation, will align with the City's study of the Closson site as this is a potential future home of the police department. We will be conducting outreach with the community regarding this part of our work through at least mid-March, 2021.

Phase 2B will begin after that, and, over the next approximately year-and-a-half, Phase 2 will comprise three distinct parts: Inquiry, Public Engagement, and Recommendations. As the residents of Lambertville and the CAT begin to consider the municipal sites, the CAT first wishes to assure everyone that we have no preconceived ideas with respect to the outcome - we are committed to a deliberative, consensus-building process and begin with open minds.

During the Inquiry period, the CAT will gather information for each city-owned municipal site. This will include, but not be limited to: history, current usage, operating costs, and estimated maintenance/repair costs.

- We will listen to the town's historians, be they from the Historical Society or life-long residents.
- We will tour the sites and hear from City employees about working conditions at the facilities and how they think the city might improve municipal work environments.
- We will look at available financial records that detail historical and current costs. If capital projects have been considered and documented, we will look at those as well.
- Where possible, we will look at projected future costs of upkeep for each site.

Our end goal in this part is to begin the Public Engagement period ready to share all pertinent and useful information with the public.

In the Public Engagement period, the CAT will first present its factual findings on the municipal sites so residents can begin their input upon a strong foundation of data.

- Following COVID safety guidelines, the CAT will then reach out to stakeholders and residents through a variety of means including updates, newsletters, office hours, community forums, and focus groups.
- We also hope to have informal conversations over the phone, across front porches, or wherever we happen to meet. (We are your neighbors, after all.)

- For those residents who prefer paper-based updates, look for our articles in “Lambertville Matters.”
- The CAT will also provide ongoing updates via the city's list-serve.

Throughout this period, we intend to foster and facilitate vigorous conversations about the future. Our end goal in this part is to have a clear understanding of the public sentiment regarding all possible options.

Following the Inquiry and Public Engagement periods, the CAT will formulate recommendations to the City Council. The public can be assured that into our deliberations we will take into account historic and architectural values, community preferences, and fiscal realities. The CAT’s goal is to be thorough during the Inquiry and Public Engagement periods, so that we are well-prepared to finalize our specific recommendations to the City Council. Because we are a diverse group of individuals, and because it’s therefore unlikely we will make unanimous recommendations, our recommendations will include dissenting views.

The CAT will keep the process as straightforward as possible. Inevitably, the conversation and the issues will grow in complexity as the community builds on what it knows, what it wants, and what might be possible. People will disagree, sometimes passionately. For our part, the CAT’s work will be guided by the knowledge that our vibrant community comes to its civic involvement respecting the good intentions of all involved. We very much look forward to our work in the months ahead. And we hope you’ll be a part of it. Feel free to write to us at [Catchairs@lambertville.org](mailto:Catchairs@lambertville.org) with questions, concerns, or suggestions and find more information on our webpage [lambertvillenj.org/cat](http://lambertvillenj.org/cat).