

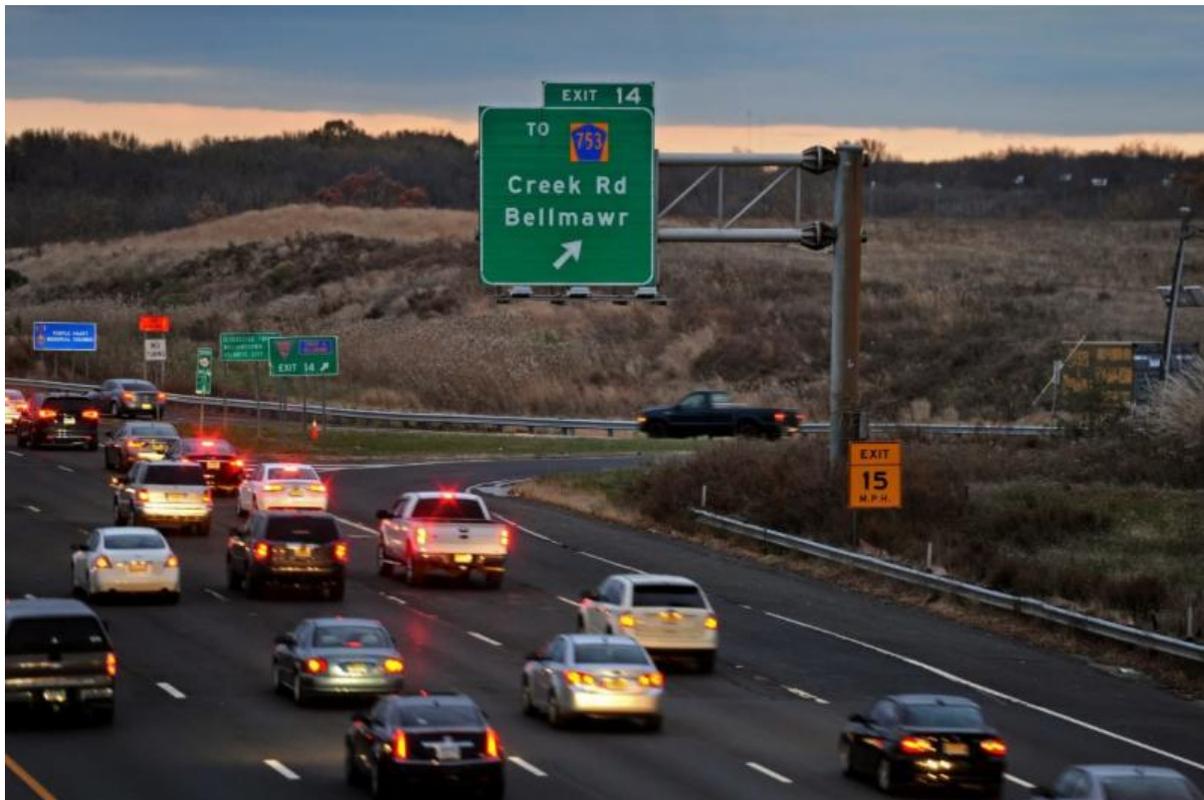


**IN THE BAG**  
**TRADING TRASH FOR CASH, TREES THE GIANT LANDFILL AT**  
**I-295 AND ROUTE 42 WOULD BECOME RETAIL SPACE AND PARK**  
**UNDER NEW PLANS BEING BANDIED ABOUT**

A hulking, 150-acre landfill that looms at the busy Route 42 and I-295 interchange in South Jersey would be transformed into a commercial center with a park overlooking Big Timber Creek, according to the latest round of plans for the long-dormant site.

Bellmawr officials introduced a plan this week that still needs a second vote by council as well as approval from the Camden County planning board. But borough administrator Joshua Tregear called the updated plan good news and was hopeful the park would be open some time next year.

That would be far before completion of the state Department of Transportation's \$900 million "Direct Connection" road-and-ramp-reconfiguration project underway in the same area where Interstates 295 and 76 and Route 42 converge in Camden County, a project whose finish line, officials said, has been moved from 2021 to 2024.



A spokesman for the DOT said Wednesday the delay was caused by increased time needed to acquire the right-of-way for part of the project.

The DOT is planning a new access road to the Bellmawr development site in parallel with that massive

road project.



"This has been a long time coming," Tregear said of the plan to transform the landfill. "The project started in 2006."

Indeed, Bellmawr's plan is the third iteration of a process that began with remediation of the landfill - actually four separate landfills that included municipal waste and a private dump. This updated version includes details on the park.

Tregear said he's optimistic the final touches on the capping and vegetation will soon be complete and that a park will be open by next year. He said the park will be a mile-long ribbon overlooking the creek, which feeds into the Delaware River. The park will comprise about 12 acres of land.

"It's going to have a very natural feel to it," Tregear said. "It would be something like you see down in the Chesapeake area."

The overall plans, drawn by Remington & Vernick Engineers in Haddonfield, call for three phases of work on the site, which has multiple owners. Those owners include the borough and Big Timber Junction LLC, the chosen redeveloper, which includes multiple investors.

The park would be built in the first phase. The next two phases include a mix of development, including retail and potential housing if required by the state's mandate on affordable housing.

"The waterfront park should provide public access to the Big Timber Creek waterfront area," the plan states, "and should include at a minimum, nonexclusive visitor parking areas, scenic vistas, improved natural trails, benches and rest areas, and also signs providing interpretative ecological information to the public."

It also "encourages" access for boating and fishing through a dock or pier.

A rendering of the park area by SR3engineers, of Bellmawr, shows a strip of green along the waterfront, stretching from Deptford Township to Runnemede Borough, both of which border Bellmawr.

The last two phases of Bellmawr's redevelopment plan are not fully detailed. But conditional uses include a retailer with at least 50,000 square feet of floor space, with walkways connecting the retail areas and the park.

The plan calls for any new development to be "walkable," "visually interesting," and with a "sense of place." Stores connecting in strip-mall fashion should have "distinctive awnings, signage, and store windows" that give the area a unique feel.

Officials also hope for a shuttle to the PATCO rail line and Philadelphia International Airport.

Previously, a Bass Pro Shops was a potential big-name store for the site. But it chose Atlantic City because of difficulty getting a direct access road for the store in Bellmawr. But officials say there is a lot of interest in the site and that more details on potential stores and anchors could come in the beginning of 2018.

(By Frank Kummer, Staff Writer - Philadelphia Inquirer - 11-24-17)

*RT Environmental Services has been working on this NJ Brownfields site for a decade, and it is a major milestone that roadway improvements are imminent and redevelopment is at hand.*

*Gary R. Brown, L.S.R.P.*



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