

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

The Community Facilities Plan Element examines the existing public facilities in the Town of Westfield, as well as the future needs for public facilities. The COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN map shows the community facilities that are proposed to continue and/or be modified by the plan. Other than the municipal building renovations now being planned, this Master Plan does not envision the need for any major capital-intensive improvements to existing Town-owned facilities in the near future. This presumes and emphasizes the need for adequate maintenance of existing facilities.

### Utilities

While maintenance, repair and minor improvements are ongoing to these systems, no major extensions or improvements to these utility systems are proposed by this plan.

### Public Schools

While education is the primary mission of the public school system, the school facilities are also used for several other functions, including community recreation and cultural activities, office and storage space for the Town Recreation Department and the Union County Educational Services Commission, and as meeting space for various community groups. Recognizing that the Board of Education has authority over the use of school facilities, the following proposals are made concerning the public school facilities:

- Acquire the National Guard Armory for educational purposes at such time that it may become available, subject to actual and projected needs at the time. The location of the armory in a central location and near Westfield High School makes it appropriate for this purpose.
- Take action to reduce the amount of on-street parking related to Westfield High School, including but not limited to consideration of the use and development of the National Guard Armory property for parking by students.
- Lincoln School is currently being leased for use as a special education school. The long-term future use of Lincoln School is not certain at this time, and should be the subject of monitoring and future study.

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- The practice of using school facilities for organized recreation activities is proposed to continue, and to make the buildings available for community groups.
- The Board of Education's responsibility is to determine the best way to redraw district boundaries so as to better achieve more balanced enrollments at the elementary and secondary levels.

### **Municipal Building**

Improvements and renovations to the municipal building are now being planned, and are supported by the Planning Board. The Board recommends that various community organizations be permitted to use certain sections of the municipal building as space allows. It is not envisioned that an addition to the building will be necessary, since space has been made available by the relocation of the library to the new library building.

### **Parks and Recreation**

The RECREATION PLAN map gives the location of the sites listed on Westfield's Open Space Inventory, and indicates the recreation facilities that exist at each of the sites. In addition, the map shows several sites not listed on the inventory. These sites are not formally designated as parks, but are currently being used for passive or active recreation. Finally, the map also shows Westfield's school sites. The Board of Education presently makes several of its facilities available to the Town for recreation purposes. The following recommendations are made to improve the Town's open space and recreation facilities:

- At such time as they become available, the following sites should be considered for open space acquisition: a) Echo Lake Country Club, b) Nomahegan Swim Club, c) the National Guard Armory, and d) all sites owned by the Board of Education. The Armory acquisition for open space purposes should only be considered if the property is not acquired for educational purposes, as discussed elsewhere in this report. There are adequate open space and recreation facilities available presently, if one counts the Green Acres inventory sites, the non-designated sites and the Board of Education facilities. However, to ensure that adequate municipal open space is available for future needs, the above sites are considered the most appropriate for open space use. These sites are shown on the RECREATION PLAN map.
- The four Town open space areas between North and South Avenues at Broad Street (Plaza Park) should be beautified with landscaping, and benches should be provided for shoppers, merchants and the general public. The existing old gas lights, unused steps and pathways should be restored. Implementation of

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these improvements is expected to wait completion of, and to be coordinated with, the street improvements planned for the South Avenue/Plaza intersection, since the street improvements are likely to affect the design and location of any beautification improvements.

- The on-going upgrade to Mindowaskin Park should be completed, including additional benches.
- The baseball field area of Memorial Pool Complex should be expanded, as it is substandard in size.
- No additional athletic fields should be added at the Clark Park site adjacent to Roosevelt Middle School.
- Brightwood Park should continue to be used primarily for passive recreation activities, and that conversion of the panhandle area to active recreational use should be strongly discouraged. Greater use of the park for passive recreation is encouraged, however, through such means as trail improvement and extension into inaccessible areas, repair of damaged facilities, and more frequent park cleaning and maintenance activities.
- If the portion of Chestnut Street that crosses Gumbert Park is closed or vacated as discussed in the circulation plan element, a study should be performed of the opportunities for improved recreation at the park.

### **Historic Sites**

The following recommendations are made concerning the publicly owned historic sites in Westfield. These sites, as well as the privately owned sites and districts being considered for designation by the Historic Preservation Commission, are shown on the HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN map:

- The North Avenue firehouse should be maintained for its present use by the Fire Department as long as it meets the needs of the Department. At such time that the building no longer meets the needs of the Fire Department, the Town should consider converting the existing building to other public uses that would preserve the integrity of this historic structure.
- The Reeves house and property should be well maintained in its present condition as a private residence. At some future time, it is proposed that the property and dwelling be converted from private to public use, such as offices and small meeting rooms for historic groups and other community or civic groups. Interior modifications and additional parking would be necessary for

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such a conversion, but this should be done in a manner which would not detract from the historic character of the site.

- It is recommended that the United Fund of Westfield and/or the Westfield Foundation be allowed to use the north-side railroad station for their offices. The area around the station and firehouse should continue to be maintained and preserved. Future studies are necessary to determine the potential reuse of both the north-side and south-side railroad stations, consistent with their transit function and historic character.
- The Plaza War Memorial should continue to be maintained and preserved.

### **Public Library**

The Westfield Memorial Library was completed in 1988 on the site of the former Grant School. Its increased size and additional services have resulted in increased usage of the facility. No recommendations are made concerning the library in this report.

### **Recycling**

Westfield is presently participating in the recycling of various portions of the solid waste generated in Town. Those items being recycled include newspaper, glass, aluminum, grass, brush, leaves and cardboard. In addition, the Board of Education has instituted a recycling program in the schools, and is looking to expand the program. The Plan proposes that the Town recycling programs be continued, and that the programs be expanded to include additional materials and to increase participation by residential, commercial and industrial uses. In the central business district, a need has been identified for recycling containers available to the public. The Planning Board also recommends a study to determine the advisability of providing uniform recycling containers for private properties.

The Town's former composting operation on Lambert's Mill Road has ceased; compost materials are now taken to an approved facility outside the municipality. The site is utilized for the chipping of brush and as a drop-off site for vegetative waste and certain recyclable materials.