



Town of Westfield, New Jersey

Master Plan

Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals and Objectives

Adopted:

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A signed and sealed copy of this Master Plan amendment is on file with the Planning Board Secretary and Town Clerk.

Town of Westfield, New Jersey

Master Plan

Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals and Objectives

The Municipal Land Use Law requires that a master plan include a “statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies, and standards upon which the constituent proposal for the physical, economic and social development of the municipality are based.” The 2002 Master Plan expressed these statements as a set of goals and objectives, with certain amendments made through adoption of the 2009 Land Use Element.

Throughout 2019, the Planning Board implemented an extensive public participation plan encouraging community involvement in the preparation of a Master Plan Reexamination Report. Through input obtained via a Master Plan Reexamination Steering Committee, online engagement, public workshops, and focus groups, the Town Planning Board determined that an update to the Goals and Objectives section contained within the Master Plan was appropriate, and that a vision statement and series of guiding principles be included within the Master Plan, along with an updated series of goals and objectives.

The following Town Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals and Objectives serve as a guide to land use policy in the Town of Westfield and replace the Goals and Objectives Section of the 2002 Master Plan as amended in 2009.

Town Vision

The Town of Westfield, celebrating its 300th anniversary in 2020, is a vibrant community with a small-town feel, which is inclusive of all residents, supports new and established businesses, and encourages quality and sustainable development. Westfield is a place where residents of all ages, incomes, cultures and creeds are welcome in the community and have the opportunity to thrive.

Westfield will be a model of carefully managed development, providing a range of housing options for all current and prospective residents within walking distance to the downtown, maintain high-quality stable single-family neighborhoods and abundant recreational and cultural opportunities.

Downtown Westfield serves as the heartbeat of the community’s commercial and social activities. It continues to be envisioned as pedestrian-oriented and mixed-use center; it will offer a variety of housing choices, retail environments, and traditional and non-traditional office employment opportunities. New development will preserve and celebrate the Town’s history and architecture and provide housing and destinations for shopping and services, all within an environment of tree-lined streets, pedestrian parks, and plazas. Westfield cherishes its heritage, while taking full advantage of new technologies and innovations. A visually enhanced streetscape with wide sidewalks, pedestrian and bike facilities will provide safe connectivity throughout downtown, on North and South Avenue, and provide linkages to its neighborhoods.

Convenient public and alternative forms of transportation will exist and the Town will strive to be a model for energy efficiency and environmental sustainability in its policies.

Guiding Principles

1
As we grow, we will strive to preserve the attributes of our unique, hometown character and community identity, the beauty of our natural environment, and the strengths of our neighborhoods, while lessening the adverse effects of growth.

2
We will retain the best qualities of a small town and respects its heritage, while embracing the opportunities that new technologies, programs and concepts in urban design provide.

3
We value open space and parks as an integral part of our community's hometown feel and will take advantage of opportunities for its enhancement and expansion.

4
We will maintain and enhance the historic and human orientation of our Downtown as the center of our community.

5
We will continue to support vibrant concentrations of retail, office, service, residential and recreational activity in Downtown.

6
We will maintain a strong and diverse economy and to provide a business climate that retains and attracts locally owned companies, as well as internationally recognized corporations.

7
We will promote citizens and institutions that value cultural diversity and seeks ways to promote involvement from all cultural groups.

8
We realize that architectural and land use design is fundamental to our identity. As Westfield progresses into the future, special attention will be given to promoting high quality residential and commercial development that reflects aesthetic excellence.

9
We will commit to sustainable practices that promote social equity, environmental health and economic prosperity.

10
We will preserve our single-family neighborhoods while providing housing choices that will allow people to age in place.

11
The long-term economic well-being of the Town is fundamental to its future. Therefore, we will encourage a variety of employment opportunities, and promote unique, local businesses.

12
We will promote a Multi Modal Transportation Network (roadways, bikeways, walkways and public transportation) that are safe, accessible, which emphasize local and regional connections while considering neighborhood impacts.

Goals and Objectives

1. To provide adequate light, air and open space by establishing, administering and enforcing bulk, density and design standards that are appropriate for the various zones and uses in the community.
2. To preserve and protect the suburban character of existing residential neighborhoods through:
 - a. Zone designations based upon existing neighborhood development patterns and according to the environmental requirements for the respective residential uses.
 - b. Bulk, density and design standards that are appropriate for the various dwelling types and not overly intensive in relation to the lot(s) on which a dwelling is situated in their respective zones.
 - c. Discouraging through traffic in residential areas whenever possible.
 - d. Regulations to preserve and enhance visual appearance of residential neighborhoods; and
 - e. Discouraging demolitions of older housing units that contribute to the Town's community character and rehabilitate such homes, when feasible.
3. To minimize the environmental impact resulting from development through:
 - a. Appropriate regulations to encourage green building design in all new construction.
 - b. Appropriate regulations that discourage disturbance of steep slopes and vegetation.
 - c. Appropriate regulations that discourage unnecessary development in wetlands and flood hazard areas.
 - d. Implementation of best practices in stormwater management.
 - e. Appropriate regulations to ensure implementation of current soil conservation and erosion control measures.
 - f. Appropriate regulations to protect and/or replace trees/woodlands impacted by development projects; and
 - g. Proactive and sustainable measures to mitigate the acceleration and impact of climate change.
4. To provide adequate municipal open space for a variety of active and passive recreational uses by:
 - a. Maintaining the present amount of open space available to Town residents, and by providing at least 8 acres of municipal open space per 1,000 persons in the community as land becomes available.
 - b. Making improvements that encourage the use of and improve the access to passive open space areas; and
 - c. Adopt the recommendations of the 2019 Parks Master Plan.
5. To maintain and enhance the viability of the various business districts by:
 - a. Encouraging an appropriate mix of land uses that will complement one another and meet the retail and service needs of the Town.
 - b. Promoting a desirable visual environment and preserving the small-town atmosphere in the business districts.
 - c. Providing or requiring the provision of sufficient numbers of parking and loading spaces in the appropriate locations to serve the needs of the general public.
 - d. Promoting a desirable pedestrian environment in the downtown business district.
 - e. Discouraging automobile-only oriented development in the central business district, including "strip malls"; and
 - f. Offering placemaking opportunities, including public art, open space,

pedestrian nodes, and community gathering spaces.

6. Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that also encourages mobility by all modes.

- a. Improved transit service on the New Jersey Transit Raritan Valley Line serving Westfield.
- b. Identifying and addressing roadway safety issues.
- c. Promoting traffic calming in key locations to discourage speeding and cut-through traffic.
- d. Minimizing traffic congestion and providing for safe and convenient access to properties.
- e. Developing and maintaining walking and biking routes that enhance connectivity to Town facilities and other key locations in Town; and
- f. Improving pedestrian safety at signalized intersections and other areas of safety concern.

7. To eliminate areas of conflict or incompatibility in land use or zoning between Westfield and adjacent municipalities by:

- a. Rezoning, where appropriate, those areas that conflict with the use or zoning of adjacent municipalities; and
- b. Encouraging the buffer/separation of incompatible uses and/or zones.

8. To provide a wide range of housing types and densities in a manner that maintains and is compatible with the predominant existing single family detached dwelling development pattern through:

- a. Various zone districts that permit single-family detached, two-family and single-family attached, and multi-family dwellings where appropriate.

- b. Density standards that reflect existing neighborhood conditions, where appropriate, as well as the needs of various housing types; and
- c. Rezoning in appropriate locations, for mixed use or residential uses, establishing densities within walking distance of the CBD- Central Business District and NJ Transit railroad stations.

9. To address the need of affordable housing for the local and regional population of low- and moderate-income persons by establishing various zone districts that encourage the provision of affordable housing, where appropriate.

10. To address the need for senior citizen housing through:

- a. Zone districts that encourage the development of housing units that are designed to meet the particular needs of senior citizens.

11. To promote the conservation of the various historical sites, structures and districts in Westfield by:

- a. Identifying the various historic sites, structures and districts that exist.
- b. Establishing appropriate regulations for the preservation of historic sites and structures.
- c. Establishing appropriate regulations that encourage development and redevelopment in historic districts to be compatible with existing historic structures and sites in the district.
- d. Encouraging adaptive re-use of older historic buildings; and
- e. Educating the public about the process and benefits of historic preservation designation.

12. To promote the conservation of energy and the recycling of recyclable materials through:

- a. Appropriate regulations that require recycling of recyclable materials.
- b. Encouraging green infrastructure in site design, energy efficient design, and sustainable building practices; and
- c. Encouraging reduced carbon footprints through alternative fuel vehicle infrastructure and promoting alternative modes of transportation to minimize automobile travel.

13. To address underutilized or vacant sites, encourage redevelopment or rehabilitation where properties meet those standards set forth in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

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