

CIRCULATION PLAN

The circulation plan element is designed to provide safe and convenient mobility and access for the Town's residents, employees and patrons, and also for motorists passing through Westfield. The plan proposals are grouped into five categories: 1) street classification, 2) intersection improvement proposals, 3) central business district proposals, and 4) other circulation proposals.

Street Classification

The CIRCULATION PLAN map classifies all streets in Westfield according to their function. Roadways have two general functions: to provide mobility and to provide access to property. The function of major highways is primarily to provide mobility; the function of local streets is primarily to provide access. Between these two classifications are the roads that combine these functions.

The circulation plan for Westfield has five functional classifications: State arterial, County arterial, Town arterial, Town collector and minor streets. The difference between State, County and Town arterials is partly a matter of governmental jurisdiction over the design, improvement and maintenance of these roads; but it is also a matter of function. State arterials generally carry the highest volume of traffic and have the most access limitations. They also provide mobility for a larger geographic area than County or Town arterials. County arterials typically carry less volume, and have more access points. They commonly serve as connecting routes between several communities. Town arterials generally carry the least volume (although not always), and have the most access points. They connect locations within Westfield to adjacent communities, or different parts of Westfield. Collector streets, as the name implies, collect traffic from minor streets and provide access to arterial roads. The volume of traffic on collector roads is less than that on arterial streets. Minor streets serve primarily to provide access to individual lots or to provide mobility for short distances; they carry the least amount of traffic. The following sections describe the specific classifications for Westfield's streets:

State Arterials

Route 22 and Route 28 are classified as state arterials. Route 28 includes all of North Avenue east of Broad Street, the Plaza, and all of South Avenue west of Westfield Avenue. Improvements to these roads are under the jurisdiction of the State of New Jersey. In addition, pursuant to the State Highway Access Management Act, Westfield's site plan and subdivision regulations require conformity with the State highway access management code.

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County Arterials

The following streets are classified as County arterials: 1) East Broad Street east of Mountain Avenue, 2) West Broad Street, 3) Central Avenue, 4) Lambert's Mill Road, 5) Mountain Avenue, 6) North Avenue west of Broad Street, 7) South Avenue except for a section from Plaza to mid-way between Westfield Avenue and Summit Avenue, and 8) Springfield Avenue. Improvements to these roads are within the jurisdiction of Union County. As with State highways, the new State Highway Access Management Act mandates that Westfield's site plan and subdivision regulations require conformity with any County access management code that is adopted. The content of any access management code that may be formulated by the County should be closely monitored as it is developed, in order to better harmonize County and local planning objectives.

Town Arterials

The following streets are classified as Town arterials: 1) East Broad Street from North Avenue to Mountain Avenue, 2) Rahway Avenue, and 3) South Avenue from Plaza to a point mid-way between Westfield Avenue and Summit Avenue. The improvement standards for Town arterials require a minimum pavement width of 36 feet and a minimum right-of-way width of 50 feet. Parking is normally discouraged on arterial streets, although in many instances this is not possible in Westfield due to existing development conditions. Parking on the Town arterials should be prohibited or restricted during peak travel hours, however, unless such prohibition or restriction would result in significant detriments to area properties.

Town Collectors

The following streets are classified as Town collectors:

Boulevard north of Clover Street
Brightwood Avenue
Chestnut Street (both north and south)
Clark Street south of Dudley Avenue
Clifton Street
Clover Street east of Boulevard
Dorian Road
Dudley Avenue
Elm Street south of Dudley Avenue
Elmer Street north of North Avenue
Euclid Avenue (both north and south)
Fourth Avenue
Gallows Hill Road

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Grove Street
Lawrence Avenue
Lenox Avenue west of Elmer Street
Park Street
Prospect Street south of Brightwood Avenue
Quimby Street
Scotch Plains Avenue north of Shackamaxon Drive
Shackamaxon Drive west of Rahway Avenue
Summit Avenue north of Park Street
Sycamore Street
Westfield Avenue
Willow Grove Road
Woodland Avenue

The pavement width standard for collector streets is 30 feet, and the right-of-way should be at least 50 feet wide. Collector streets should normally receive priority for improvements over local streets, due to the greater volume of traffic they carry. It should be emphasized that classification of a street does not necessarily imply that improvements will be made. In the case of curbing, Westfield continues to follow its practice of not making curbing improvements unless there is a petition from more than 50 percent of the property owners along the street to make such improvements.

Minor Streets

All other streets in Westfield are classified as minor streets. They have a preferred width standard of 30 feet for pavement and 50 feet for the right-of-way.

Proposed Intersection Improvements

The following intersection improvements are proposed in order to address various problems at the intersections. These intersections are also shown as circles on the CIRCULATION PLAN map. It is understood that review and approval by County and/or State agencies will be necessary for many of the proposed improvements.

- The Planning Board recommends that the Town monitor the planned design and improvements at the circle at the intersection of Plaza and South Avenue and provide input concerning the coordination of the design and improvements with the beautification of Plaza Park. The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) has improved traffic signage at the circle in order to improve traffic flow, and NJDOT is preparing a redesign of the intersection, but the timing for implementation of the design improvements is uncertain at this time.

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- Studies should be performed of the following intersections to address traffic issues and pedestrian safety:

North Avenue at Central Avenue (turning movements)
Lawrence Avenue at Dudley Avenue

- A study should be performed to determine the best policy for on-street parking on North Avenue between Elm Street and Central Avenue. Any study should balance the need for parking by area employees and patrons with the need for improved traffic flow and safety in this area.
- A pilot study should be conducted of certain intersections to demonstrate the need for and benefits resulting from balancing vehicular and pedestrian movements at intersections, with an emphasis on "traffic calming" measures.

Central Business District Proposals

As a general policy, it is recommended that through traffic be discouraged from the central business district as much as possible. When this is not possible, improvements to reduce congestion are recommended. The expansion and enhancement of public parking for retail business uses is recommended, including continued development of a management plan that should include consideration of a tiered parking structure.

Other Circulation Proposals

In addition to the proposed intersection improvements outlined previously, various studies are proposed to improve traffic circulation and increase safety. These include the following:

- On-street parking policy for Central Avenue. It is recognized that Central Avenue is a heavily traveled roadway, and that on-street parking can contribute to increased traffic congestion. Any study should consider issues of pedestrian safety and the need to reduce traffic speed.
- Traffic calming measures for certain streets.
- Provision of "Midtown Direct" service for the railroad station, and pursue implementation of same.
- Potential locations for bicycle routes.
- Opportunities for enhanced lighting for pedestrian safety.