



The Town of Westfield Master Plan Reexamination Report Community & Public Participation Summary for the Stakeholder Visioning Workshop

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architects + engineers
practical approach. creative results.

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Community & Public Participation

Purpose

This Master Plan Reexamination Report cannot be written, nor recommendations made without input from the people who live, work, and visit Westfield. Without valuable public input, this document will not accurately represent the wants and needs of Westfield residents. The Master Plan Team is working hard to obtain ideas, opinions, feedback, and concerns from the public throughout the year long Master Plan Reexamination process using “high touch” to “high tech” approaches, ranging from traditional workshops to online engagement. This collaborative approach will, no doubt, lead to community consensus on the future of Westfield.

Stakeholder Visioning Workshop

A Master Plan Reexamination Steering Committee comprised of Westfield community leaders will help guide the Comprehensive Plan process. The Steering Committee, upon their first meeting in December 2018, believed that input from several active Town organizations separate from public workshops would benefit the Master Plan Reexamination process. The Master Plan Team held an invite-only Stakeholder Visioning Workshop on Wednesday February 6, 2019 from 7pm to 9pm in the evening at Town Hall in the Community Room. Approximately 44 people attended the event from the following community groups:

- Master Plan Reexamination Steering Committee
- Board of Education (BOE)
- Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC)
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Recreation Commission
- Green Team
- Senior Advisory Council
- Technology Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Tree Preservation Commission
- Union County Transportation Advisory Board
- Housing Commission
- Planning Board
- Access and Inclusivity Committee



The Town of Westfield Master Plan Reexamination Report

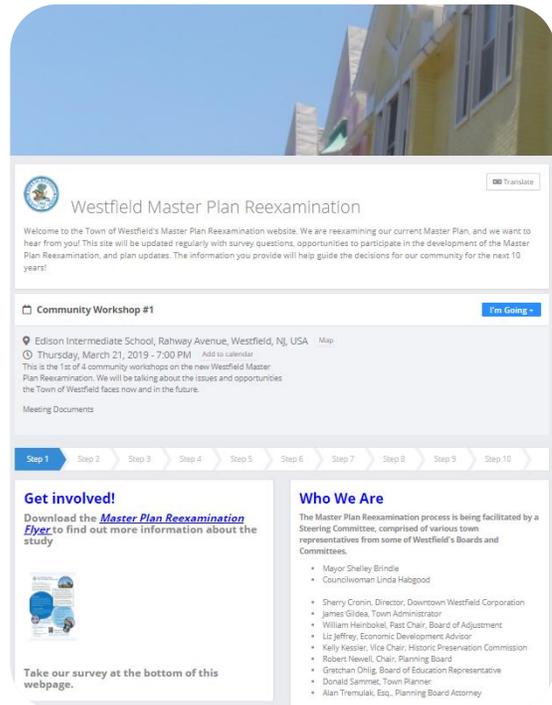
Community & Public Participation Summary for the Stakeholder Visioning Workshop



The workshop began with an introduction from Mayor Shelley Brindle and Jeff Janota of H2M Associates, the consultant preparing the Master Plan Reexamination Report and head organizer of the event. Erik DeLine and Nicole Venezia, planners from H2M, were also in attendance. Upon sign-in, participants were directed by H2M staff to sit at a specified table amongst their community group members. Mayor Brindle and Jeff Janota (H2M) explained the Master Plan Reexamination process and the purposes of the night's workshop:

1. To gain an understanding of each community groups' mission, challenges, and recommendations for better group functioning.
2. To understand Westfield's basic values, concerns, desired constants, recommended changes, and envisioned future.
3. To promote the Master Plan Reexamination public participation process by encouraging participants to be ambassadors to the Plan.

Erik DeLine (H2M) then explained the project's website, www.PublicInput.com/WestfieldMP and encouraged participants to take the online survey in their free time.





Workshop Part 1

The purpose of Part 1 of the workshop is to gain an understanding of each community groups' mission, challenges, and recommendations for better group functioning.



Part 1 of the workshop required each community group to answer questions regarding their specific group's needs and accomplishments. The questionnaire for Part 1 was distributed via email prior to the Visioning Workshop. While some groups sent in their answers prior to the stakeholder meeting, all groups discussed the questions and added to their responses at the Stakeholder Visioning Workshop. The Master Plan Team floated around the room during this time to help groups answer questions. Completed questionnaires from Part 1 of the Workshop are attached at the end of this report. The questions are listed below:

- 1. What strengths does your group have that may assist Westfield in your functions or other groups in the Town?**
- 2. What new initiatives has your group undertaken or plan to undertake within the next year?**
- 3. What challenges do you face that hinder you from doing the things you need to as an organization?**
- 4. What changes do you recommend in terms of policies or programs that may assist your ability to carry out your functions?**
- 5. What is especially important about your group's efforts that need to be communicated in the Master Plan Re-examination?**

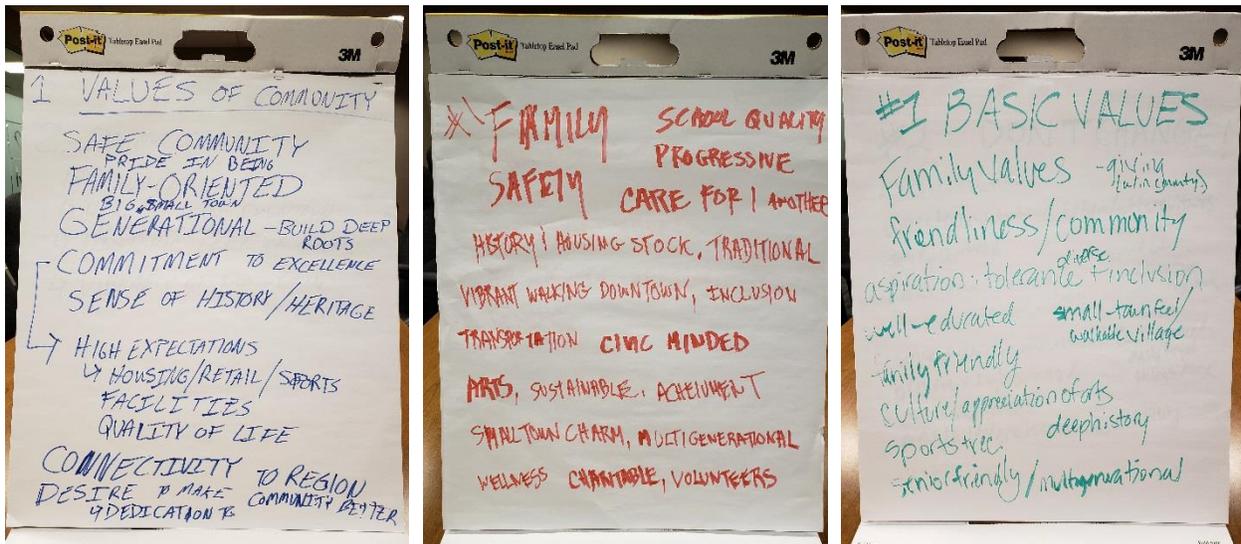


Workshop Part 2

The purpose of Part 2 of the workshop was to understand Westfield’s basic values, concerns, desired constants, recommended changes, and envisioned future.

Part 2 of the workshop required workshop participants to split up into three large groups of approximately 15 people each. Each group discussion was facilitated by an H2M staff member. Each group was posed with seven questions, of which the discussion outcomes are bulleted below:

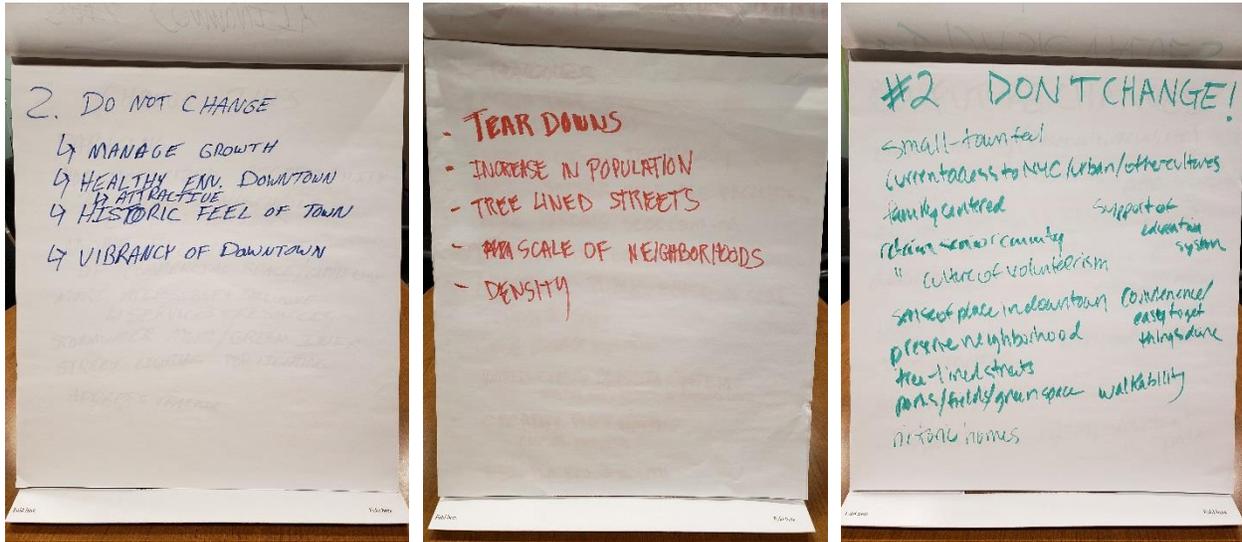
1. In your opinion, what are the basic values of the community?



The three groups identified the following **basic values** for Westfield:

- safe community (x2)
- family oriented (x3)
- multi-generational (x3)
- history/heritage (x2)
- commitment to excellence/achievement (x2)
- well educated
- high expectations
- connectivity to region
- desire and dedication to make community better
- vibrant, walking downtown (x2)
- transportation
- civic minded
- appreciation of arts/culture (x2)
- sustainable
- small-town charm (x2)
- wellness
- charitable/giving/volunteers (x2)
- sports and rec. (x2)
- friendliness/community

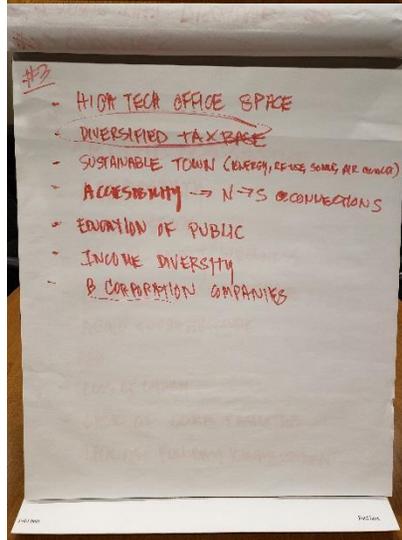
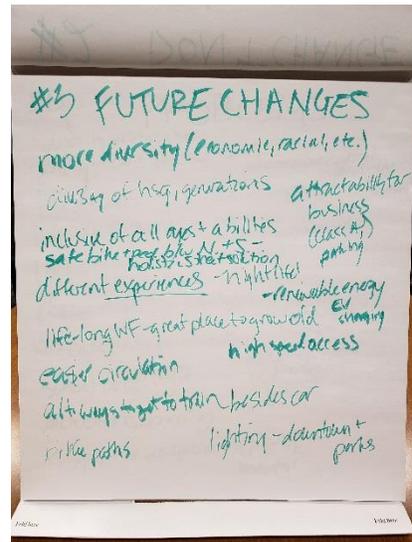
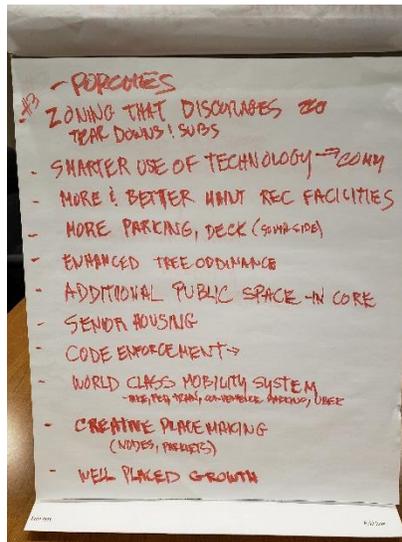
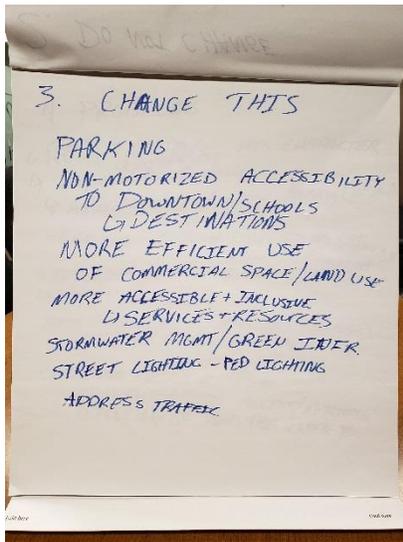
2. What do you value about Westfield that you do not want to see change?



The three groups identified the following **desired constants** for Westfield:

- downtown (x3)
- historic feel of Town (x2)
- tree lined streets (x2)
- scale of neighborhoods (x2)
- connectivity to region
- family centeredness
- walkability
- parks/fields/open space
- support of education system

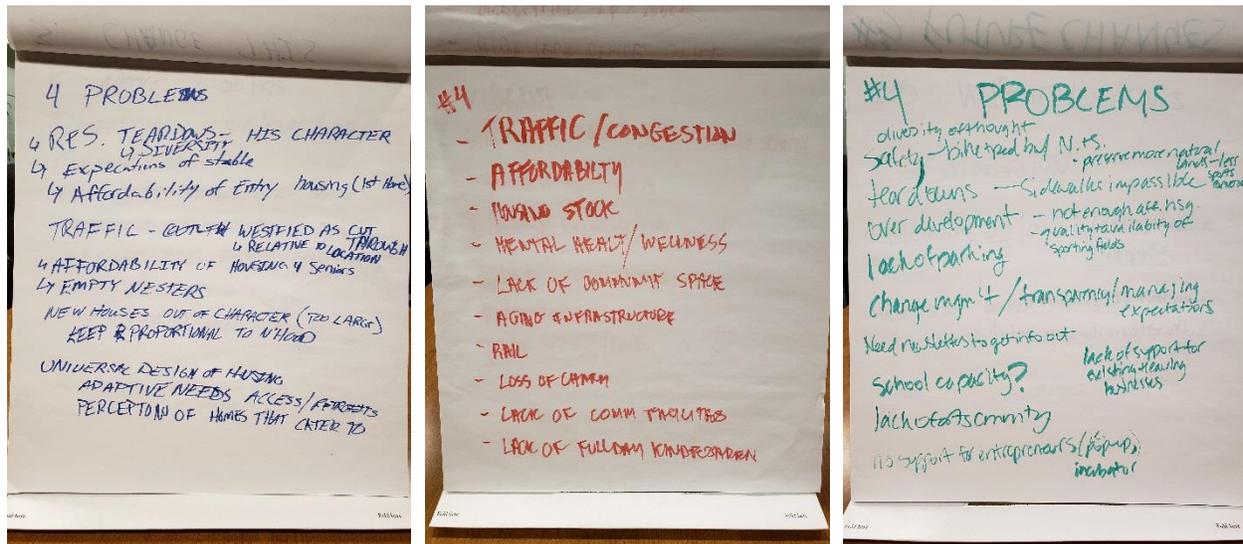
3. What changes do you want to see take place in Westfield in the future?



The three groups identified the following **desired changes** for Westfield:

- lack of parking (x2)
- better non-motorized accessibility to destinations (x2)
- better northside-southside accessibility connections (x2)
- address traffic (x2)
- more street lighting/ pedestrian lighting/park lighting (x2)
- better maintenance of recreational facilities
- better code enforcement
- more porches
- discourage tear downs
- more senior housing
- more housing diversity
- more efficient use of commercial spaces
- attract companies (x2)
- a more diversified tax base
- different downtown experiences
- more income diversity (x2)
- more racial diversity
- smarter use of technology
- be sustainable (x3)
- encourage life-long Westfield – a great place to live and grow old

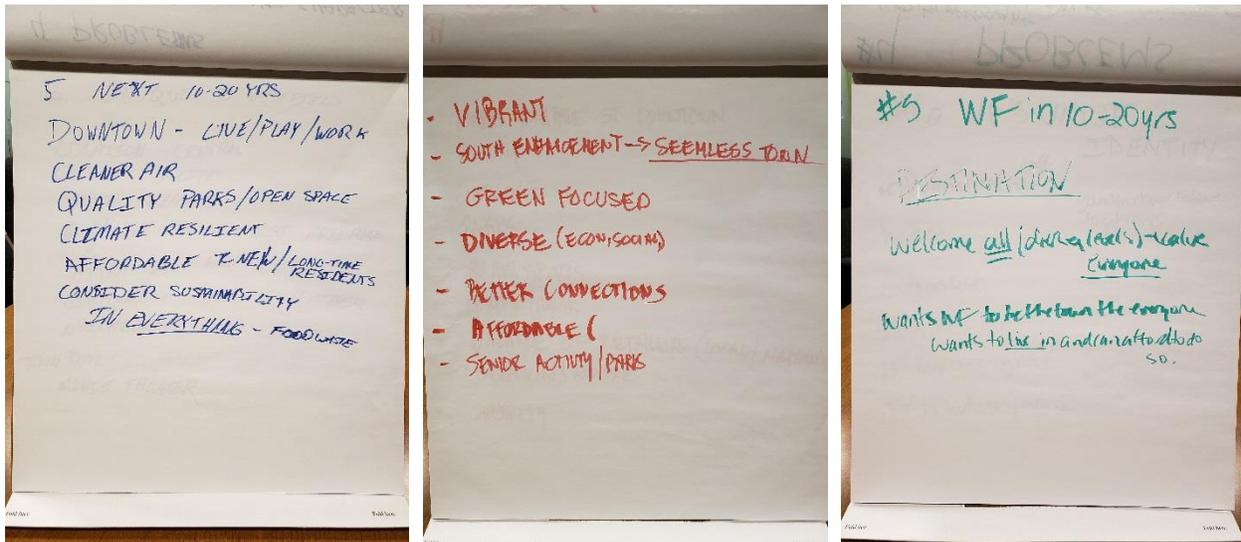
4. What problems do you perceive that concern you about the future of Westfield?



The three groups identified the following concerns about Westfield:

- over development
- residential teardowns (x2)
- new houses too large
- affordability of entry housing (x3)
- affordability of housing for seniors/empty nesters
- need housing that is adaptive to individual needs (elderly, disabled)
- loss of charm
- traffic/congestion/cut-through (x2)
- safety of bicyclists and pedestrians on northside and southside connectors
- rail
- lack of parking
- aging infrastructure
- lack of support for entrepreneurs
- governmental transparency
- lack of arts community
- mental health/wellness
- quality and availability of sporting fields
- lack of community space
- lack of community facilities
- loss of natural lands
- lack of full day kindergarten
- school capacity

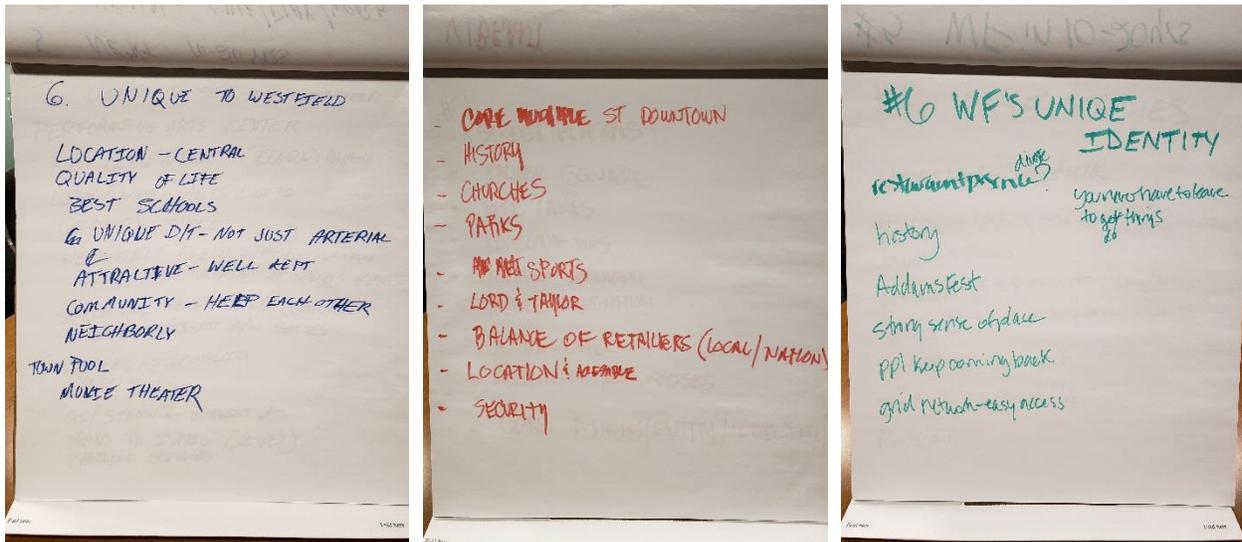
5. What do you want Westfield to be like in the next 10-20 years?



The three groups identified the following **desires** for Westfield in 10-20 years:

- downtown – live, play, work
- cleaner air
- quality open spaces/parks
- climate resilient
- affordable to new and long-time residents (x2)
- sustainable Town (x2)
- vibrant
- seamless between northside and southside
- economically diverse (x2)
- socially diverse (x2)
- destination
- be the Town everyone wants to live in and can afford to do so

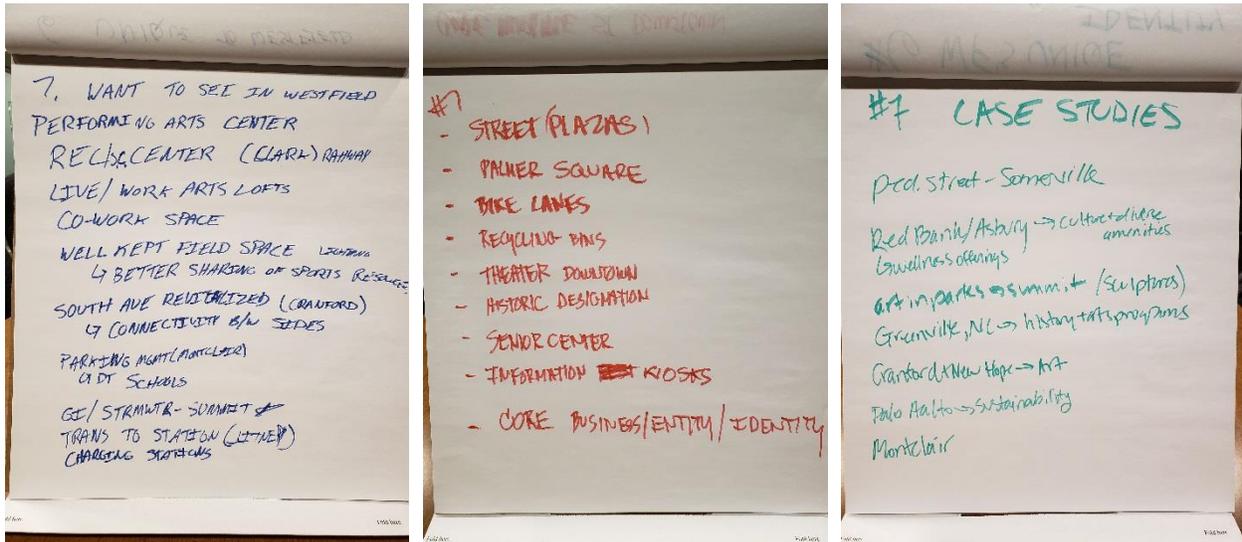
6. What is unique to Westfield not found anywhere else?



The three groups identified the following **unique features** of Westfield:

- central location (x2)
- quality of life
- best schools
- core downtown (x3)
- neighborly
- Town pool
- movie theatre
- churches
- parks
- sports
- Lord & Taylor
- balance of retailers
- security
- history
- AddamsFest
- strong sense of place
- people keep coming back
- grid network/easy access (x2)

7. Name something you saw in another community that you would like to be incorporated in Westfield.



The three groups identified the following features from different communities/general wants they believed Westfield could learn from/implement:

- performing arts center
- recreation center – Clark, Rahway
- live/work arts lofts
- co-work spaces
- well kept field space
- South Avenue revitalization - Cranford
- parking management - Montclair
- green infrastructure/stormwater - Summit
- transportation to train station/jitneys – Glen Ridge
- street/plazas
- Palmer Square - Princeton
- bike lanes
- recycling bins
- senior center
- information kiosks – NYC
- pedestrian street – Somerville
- wellness offerings – Red Bank
- culture & diverse amenities – Asbury Park
- arts in parks - Summit
- history and arts programs – Greenville, SC
- art – Cranford, New Hope
- sustainability – Pao Alto, CA



Next Steps

The night concluded with a verbal summary of each group’s discussions. The Master Plan team explained next steps, including a summary report of the night’s discussions – this document fulfills that deliverable.

The Master Plan Team again stressed the importance of each participant being an ambassador and advocate for the Master Plan Reexamination Report and its process by encouraging friends and neighbors to visit the project website, take the survey, and attend community workshops.

The Master Plan Team and Town of Westfield is hosting several public Community Workshops in the month ahead to continue outreach efforts. These events include:

- Thursday, March 21, 7-9pm: Edison School cafeteria
- Wednesday, April 3, 7-9pm: Town Hall Community Room
- Wednesday, April 24, 7-9pm: Edison School cafeteria
- Monday, April 29, 7-9pm: Town Hall Community Room
- Sunday, May 5: Spring Fling

In the fall, the Master Plan Team will hold Town-wide public meetings to discuss the draft of the plan and gain feedback on the Master Plan Reexamination Report’s draft goals, objectives and recommendations.