

2019 MASTER PLAN UPDATE



REEXAMINATION REPORT AND PLAN ELEMENT AMENDMENTS

TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE | ESSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

PREPARED FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE PLANNING BOARD BY

PHILLIPS PREISS GRYGIEL LEHENY HUGHES LLC

PLANNING & REAL ESTATE CONSULTANTS

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2019 MASTER PLAN UPDATE

**REEXAMINATION REPORT
AND PLAN ELEMENT AMENDMENTS**

**TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE
ESSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

Prepared for:

Township of West Orange Planning Board

Prepared by:

Phillips Preiss Grygiel Leheny Hughes LLC
33-41 Newark Street
Third Floor, Suite D
Hoboken, New Jersey 07030

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Paul Grygiel, AICP, PP
New Jersey Professional Planner License # 5518

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Township of West Orange is a unique municipality, comprised of several distinct neighborhoods and commercial districts, with varied character and topography across its 12 square miles. Its development pattern was generally set in place decades ago, but there have been changes in recent years due to redevelopment and reinvestment throughout the Township.

This Master Plan Update builds upon prior planning efforts such as the 2010 Reexamination Report and plan element amendments adopted at that time and more recently. It supports efforts to increase sustainability and walkability in West Orange while addressing legal requirements for planning set forth by State law. The following are some of the key recommendations of this document.

Land Use

- Consider changes to **permitted uses**, including the following outlined below.
- **Modify permitted uses in commercial zones**, in recognition of market changes for retail and other uses. Recommended changes include allowing limited medical uses in P-C zone (e.g. urgent care, physical therapy) and adding fitness centers/health clubs as a permitted use in commercial zones.
- **Permit microbreweries, distilleries and wineries** in appropriate locations. These types of uses have become more prevalent in recent years in New Jersey due to changes in state laws, and can be economic development drivers.
- **Evaluate whether there are locations appropriate to permit medical cannabis production and/or sales, or places where it should be prohibited**, in advance of potential future change in laws to permit recreational production and sales. An appropriate means of regulating these uses could be by only allowing them as conditional uses in certain zoning districts.
- **Permit drive-through windows as a customarily accessory use** for banks, fast food and pharmacies, while providing standards regulating the use.
- **Modify zone district designations** to address inconsistencies between existing land uses and zoning, and to promote economic development in certain locations.
- Look into changes to **minimum parking standards**, particularly for downtown and the Valley as well as mixed-use developments.
- Update and improve **lighting standards** in the Land Use Regulations Ordinance.
- **Amend administrative and procedural regulations** for development application requirements, referrals to boards and commissions and for expiration of approvals.
- Outline recommendations for the **future use of the Rock Spring Club**, which was recently acquired by the municipality.



- Provide recommendations tailored to **focus areas** throughout the Township, including downtown, the Valley, Pleasantdale and other business districts.



Circulation

- Make West Orange a **safer place to walk, bike and drive** through the promotion of Complete Streets.
- **Improve connectivity** within the Township, such as between residential and commercial areas, as well as to schools, parks, community facilities and other trip generators.
- **Incorporate green streets and infrastructure**, in furtherance of New Jersey's updated stormwater management rules.
- **Work with Essex County** to enhance pedestrian safety in the vicinity of the South Mountain Reservation and Recreation Complex.
- Provide **pedestrian improvements in various business districts** and better connect them with nearby neighborhoods.
- Advocate for **improved Route 280 crossings**, with bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Coordinate with the Township's Open Space and Recreation Plan to create a **West Orange trail network**.
- **Improve parking in downtown and the Valley** through the provision of additional, larger and more visible parking signage, creating turnover of parking spaces to ensure that parking is available for patrons and potentially creating additional public parking lots.

Economic Development

- Continue to **maintain a balance of land uses**, including varied nonresidential uses and a range of appropriate housing types and sizes.
- Encourage **supporting services** for open space, recreation and tourism attractions.
- Provide **streetscape and parking improvements** throughout the downtown, Valley and other business districts.
- **Increase staffing and other resources** for downtown issues, economic development and planning.
- **Capitalize on Thomas Edison National Historical Park**, through development regulations, provision of complementary uses and physical improvements.

Open Space

- Adopt the **Open Space and Recreation Plan** as part of the Master Plan and help implement its recommendations.

Sustainability

- Continue to **make West Orange more environmentally and economically sustainable**, with a variety of transportation options, including complete streets, and a mix of land uses, housing types, community facilities, parks and open spaces accessible to all residents.
- Address the core topics required for **Sustainable Jersey certification** and provide recommendations and action steps for how West Orange will address each one.
- Amend zoning regulations in order to reduce barriers for the development of **renewable energy** and to promote **energy efficiency**.
- Promote development in **locations near transit and services**.
- Increase focus on **walkability and complete streets** throughout the Township.
- Protect **environmentally sensitive features** and areas through development regulations and other measures.



The Master Plan Update will be implemented through actions such as changes in ordinances, government spending decisions, actions by the Township's land use boards and coordination with other governmental entities.

Acknowledgments

Mayor

Robert D. Parisi

Township Council

Michelle Casalino

Jerry Guarino

Joe Krakoviak

Cindy Matute-Brown

Susan McCartney

Planning Board

Ron Weston, AIA, Chairman

John Cardoza, Vice Chairman

Dr. Robert Bagoff

Captain Michael Keigher

Lee D. Klein, PE, PTOE

Councilwoman Susan McCartney

Andrew Trenk (Mayor's Designee)

Gary B. Wegner

William B. Wilkes II

Tammy Williams (Alternate #1)

Everett M. Johnson, Esq. (Alternate #2)

Board Secretary: Robin Miller

Board Attorney: Patrick J. Dwyer, Esq.

Paul Grygiel, AICP, PP, Township Planner

John J. Hess, PE, PP, CME, Consulting Engineer

Advisor: Leonard Lepore, PE, Director of Engineering

Stakeholders

The Planning Board gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following Township residents, employees, elected officials and other stakeholders who participated in interviews conducted as part of the process of preparing this Master Plan Update:

West Orange Fire Department

Anthony A. Vecchio, Fire Chief

Fredrick R. Kingston, Deputy Fire Chief

West Orange Police Department

Captain Michael Keigher

Officer Chris Jacksic

Downtown West Orange Alliance

Megan Brill, Executive Director

John Bober, Trustee

John McElroy, Chairman
Thomas E. Ross, Superintendent, Thomas Edison National Historical Park
Elmina Zisa, Economic Development and Promotion Committee

Engineering/Public Works

Leonard R. Lepore, PE, Director

Environmental Commission

Michael Brick, Chairman

Historic Preservation Commission

Brian Feeney, Chairman

Open Space and Recreation Committee

Joseph McCartney, Chairman

Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board

Councilman Jerry Guarino, Chairman

Lori Kapferer

Roz Moskovitz Bielski

Zoning Board of Adjustment

Philip D. Neuer, Esq., Chairman

Planning and Development

Geniece Gary Adams, Zoning Official

West Orange Public Library

David Cubie, Director

Lisa Fahoury, President, Board of Trustees

West Orange Public Schools

Eveny de Mendez, Acting Superintendent

John Calavano, Business Administrator

Essex County

Luis E. Rodriguez, Assistant County Engineer

David Antonio, AICP, PP, Planner

Consultants

Phillips Preiss Grygiel Leheny Hughes LLC – Planning & Real Estate Consultants

Paul Grygiel, AICP, PP, Principal

Kathleen Thielman Puniello, AICP, PP, Senior Planner

Spach Trahan, AICP, Planner

REEXAMINATION REPORT

I. Introduction

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 mandates that a municipality's governing body shall, at least every ten years, provide for a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations by the planning board, which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination. The Township's most recent master plan reexamination report was adopted in 2010. Therefore, it is timely for West Orange to once again reexamine its master plan and development regulations.

There are five elements which a reexamination report must include:

- 1) A section outlining the major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- 2) A section describing the extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to that date.
- 3) A section discussing the extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in state, county and municipal policies and objectives.
- 4) A section setting forth the recommended changes to the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
- 5) A section setting forth the recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law" into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

This reexamination report includes all of the above required items. The first two, the major problems and objectives relating to land development in West Orange in 2010 and their current status, are consolidated in the following chapter. The remaining sections are included in subsequent chapters.

II. Problems and Objectives Set Forth in the 2010 Master Plan Reexamination and Their Current Status

This chapter outlines the major problems and objectives relating to land development in West Orange in 2010, when the Township's most recent Master Plan Reexamination was adopted. It also describes the extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to that date, thus addressing the requirements of items *a* and *b* in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89, which lists the mandatory contents of a reexamination report.

A. Master Plan Objectives

The Township's major planning objectives as set forth in the 2010 Master Plan Reexamination are summarized below, followed by a discussion of its current status:

1. **Guide Appropriate Long Range Development of Lands within the Township**

It was stated that the Township should encourage municipal actions to guide the long range development of lands within the Township of West Orange in a manner which would promote the health, safety, and general welfare of present and future residents.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid.

2. **Ensure That the Public's Safety is Secured**

The 2010 Reexamination Report re-emphasized the need to secure the public's safety from fire, flood, panic, and other natural and man-made disasters.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid.

3. **Provide and Preserve Adequate Light, Air and Open Space**

The 2010 Reexamination Report indicated the need to not only provide adequate light, air and open space but also to the preserve adequate light, air and open space for its residents.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid.

4. **Ensure Compatibility with the Development and General Welfare of Other Jurisdictions**

It was noted in the 2010 Reexamination Report that it remains an objective of the Township to ensure that development within the Township does not conflict



with the development and general welfare of neighboring municipalities, the County, the region, and the State as a whole.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid. Ongoing coordination with Essex County is vital, as most of the major roads in West Orange are County roads and Essex County has three large open space and recreation facilities in West Orange: Eagle Rock Reservation, Francis Byrne Golf Course and South Mountain Reservation. The growth of the Turtle Back Zoo and other facilities in the South Mountain Recreation Complex in particular present both opportunities and problems for the Township. There are also opportunities for improved collaboration with other municipalities, such as with Orange near the Highland Avenue train station in the Valley area.

5. Encourage the Preservation of Neighborhoods and the Environment

The 2010 Reexamination Report reiterated the need to encourage the preservation of the Township's neighborhoods and its environment.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid. It is furthered through recommendations in the updated plan elements, including Land Use, Circulation and Sustainability.

6. Encourage Coordination of Public Development with Land Use Policies

It was recommended that in order to ensure the appropriate and efficient expenditure of public funds, the Township should encourage coordination of public development with land use policies.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid. It is furthered through recommendations in the updated plan elements, including Land Use, Circulation and Community Facilities.

7. Provide Sufficient Space for Balanced Growth and Development

The 2010 Reexamination report re-emphasized the need to provide sufficient space in appropriate locations for residential, recreational, commercial/retail, industrial and open space uses in a manner that would provide balanced growth and development.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid. Given the significant amount of development activity in the Township in recent years and potential additional redevelopment, it is imperative that adequate open space and community facilities are provided to accommodate residential and business growth.

8. Ensure Safe and Efficient Transportation and Circulation Routes

The 2010 report noted the need to encourage the location and design of transportation and circulation routes which would promote the safe and efficient flow of traffic while discouraging routes and facilities resulting in congestion or compromised safety.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid. However, it should be expanded to explicitly include transportation modes beyond motor vehicles. The Township has taken actions in recent years to promote pedestrian and bicyclist safety, such as through Complete Streets principles, and

to support transit usage. The Greenways plan in the Open Space and Recreation Plan also relates to this objective.

9. Promote a Desirable Visual Environment

It was noted that the Township should continue to promote a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques and good civic design and arrangements. The 2010 document included residential design guidelines.



Current Status: This general objective remains valid and should be increased in scope. The Downtown West Orange Alliance recently adopted design standards for the downtown area. Consideration should be given to expanding the application of Downtown design standards — or creating new business/mixed-use district standards — to other commercial areas in the Township which are subject to redevelopment and new development.

10. Promote the Preservation of Historic Structures and Places

The 2010 Reexamination Report stated that the Township should continue to promote the preservation of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects and districts, and maintain the appropriate settings for such places.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid. It is furthered through recommendations in the updated Historic Preservation Plan Element.

11. Encourage Development, Redevelopment and Rehabilitation of the Main Street Central Business District and the Downtown Redevelopment Area

The 2010 Reexamination Report reaffirmed this objective from the 2004 Reexamination, while noting that this redevelopment project had not moved forward due in large part to changes in economic and real estate market conditions, but that actions had been taken since 2004 to further this objective and that improving the Main Street area remained a focus of the Township’s planning efforts.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid. There has been substantial progress along Main Street and in other areas of West Orange’s central business district. In particular, the first phase of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan, the Edison Village mixed-use project, has been completed. The next phase of this redevelopment project is underway, and the Township is considering expansion of the Downtown Redevelopment Area to the north along Main Street. The Valley section of downtown has also seen development activity including residential and commercial developments.

12. Provide for the Housing Needs of Senior Citizens and Low and Moderate Income Households

The 2010 Reexamination Report stated that the Township should encourage the provision of the housing for senior citizens and low to moderate income households in the Township.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid. The Township has been proactive in addressing its affordable housing obligations, as well as seeking to provide additional senior housing. West Orange has other specialized housing, including assisted living and nursing facilities, which provide community benefits to support an aging population.



13. Improve and Maintain Existing Residential Neighborhoods

It was stated that there was a need to improve and maintain residential neighborhoods by encouraging rehabilitation of existing dwellings and new residential construction at suitable densities.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid. It is furthered through recommendations in the updated plan elements, including Land Use and Circulation.

14. Promote the Recovery of Recyclable Materials from Solid Waste and Encourage the Conservation of Energy

The 2010 Reexamination Report noted that the Township should continue to encourage and promote the recovery of recyclable materials from solid waste and the conservation of energy. The Township’s first Sustainability Plan was included in the 2010 Master Plan Update.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid, and has been furthered through the adoption of a sustainability checklist for development applications in West Orange, but should be broadened to address sustainability and resiliency. Additional measures can be taken to promote this objective, as discussed in the Sustainability Plan Element and elsewhere in this document. The Planning Board recommends this objective be changed to “Promote Community Sustainability and Resiliency.”

15. Coordinate Public and Private Procedures and Activities

The 2010 report noted the need to coordinate the public and private procedures and activities that influence land development in the Township.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid, and is furthered through recommendations in the updated plan elements, including Land Use, Circulation and Community Facilities.

16. Encourage Economic Development and Redevelopment That Is Compatible with the Suburban Character of the Township

The 2010 Reexamination Report discussed the need to encourage economic development and redevelopment compatible with the suburban character of the Township, with particular sensitivity to existing residential neighborhoods. It was further noted that as the amount of open space continued to diminish, the Township should stress the importance of redevelopment of its neighborhoods. The report further stated that as commercial and industrial facilities become obsolete and outdated, efforts should be made to rehabilitate and revitalize these areas prior to, or in lieu of, the development of existing open space.



Current Status: This general objective remains valid. There has been a significant amount of redevelopment activity in West Orange since 2010, which has included investment in existing commercial and office uses as well as replacement of obsolete facilities with new development.

17. Maintain a Continual Planning Process

The 2010 report indicated that the Township should continue to maintain a continual planning process which would coordinate capital expenditures with the Master Plan and provide for development reviews to implement the Plan’s policies and standards.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid. Actions taken since 2010 to advance this objective include a comprehensive update of the Township’s Land Use Regulations Ordinance adopted in 2012 and the creation of a Site Plan Review Advisory Board in 2015 to review all major site plan applications prior to public hearings by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment.

18. Utilize Available Federal, State and County Level Funding Sources

It was stated that the Township should utilize available funding sources at the Federal, State, and County levels to improve and revitalize the community.

Current Status: This general objective remains valid.

B. Master Plan Principles

The four principles set forth in the 2010 Reexamination Report are listed below along with a discussion of the current status of each one.

1. Encourage Appropriate Residential Development

The 2010 Reexamination Report stated the overall principle of encouraging appropriate residential development in locations and densities that are consistent with existing zoning and development patterns and that can be properly served by public roadways, utilities, and services remained valid. It noted there was strong tension between encouraging single family housing development and preserving open space, which needed to be addressed through revisions to zoning standards, particularly for potentially redevelopable properties such as private golf courses. Changes were recommended to the regulations for low density cluster zoning to ensure that development yields are limited to the amount of units that would be permitted under conventional zoning after accounting for development constraints and to allow new cluster development to only permit single-family detached dwellings, not townhouses or other multi-family residential.

The Planning Board feels this principle is vague, as “appropriate residential development” can vary in different locations and contexts. In particular, mixed-use development that includes multifamily residential is appropriate in various commercial districts and other developed locations in the Township. Higher density multifamily residential development is also appropriate in limited locations adequately served by transit stations, transportation networks and other infrastructure. Senior and specialized housing options should be supported as well, as long as potential development impacts are addressed. This principle should not be construed, however, as supporting increased densities and out-of-scale development in established residential neighborhoods.

2. Properly Locate Public, Commercial/Retail, Industrial, Residential and Service Uses

The 2010 document continued to emphasize the need to locate public, commercial/retail, industrial, residential and service uses at sites and locations which are suitable for their use environmentally, economically, and geographically, and can be adequately serviced by public infrastructure.

This principle is still valid.

3. Protect Natural Features and Environmental Resources

The 2010 Reexamination Report noted that one of the principles of the Master Plan was to protect natural features and environmental resources including, but not limited to, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, ridgelines, and areas valuable as scenic, historical, cultural, or recreational resources, and that revisions were being undertaken to the Township’s Natural Features Ordinance to enhance protection of environmental resources.

This principle is still valid.

4. Maintain the Existing Scale of the Community

The 2010 document further noted the need to maintain the community scale by limiting the intensity of commercial/retail, industrial and residential development to assure compatibility with existing neighborhood character.

This principle should be changed to “Maintain the Appropriate Scale of the Community.” While in many locations keeping existing development patterns intact is appropriate, there are instances where redevelopment may involve larger buildings and/or other more intensive development. There are locations in West Orange that have experienced changes in population density and development patterns. Some of these areas will continue to change to meet the diversity of demand and trends in commercial and residential development, such as transit-oriented and mixed-use development. In such cases, potential development impacts should be mitigated through appropriate site and building design.



C. Assumptions, Policies and Standards

The revised assumptions underlying the Township’s Master Plan as set forth in the 2010 Reexamination Report are as follows:

The West Orange Master Plan recognizes that the region’s economic growth has slowed in recent years due to various issues, which in turn have had impacts at the local level. However, West Orange benefits from its location and quality of life, as well as increased interest in promoting growth in areas already served by infrastructure. It is assumed that there will continue to be development activity in the Township. Such growth and development will result in pressures to intensify existing land uses and develop remaining available lands. But it also provides an opportunity for increased sustainability measures. The Township has an aging infrastructure. Within the foreseeable future, many of the Township’s existing roads, sanitary sewers, drainage facilities and public buildings and facilities will require repair or replacement. New development will place increased pressure on the infrastructure system; however, it also provides an opportunity to fund infrastructure improvements or expansions. Infill development and new development should be balanced with the need to maintain open space. In addition, redevelopment and rehabilitation of existing structures should be encouraged, consistent with smart growth principles.

Other than the first sentence, these assumptions remain valid, as economic growth has resumed in the region and in West Orange in recent years.

Below are discussions of the general policies and standards included in the 2010 Master Plan, and how they have changed:

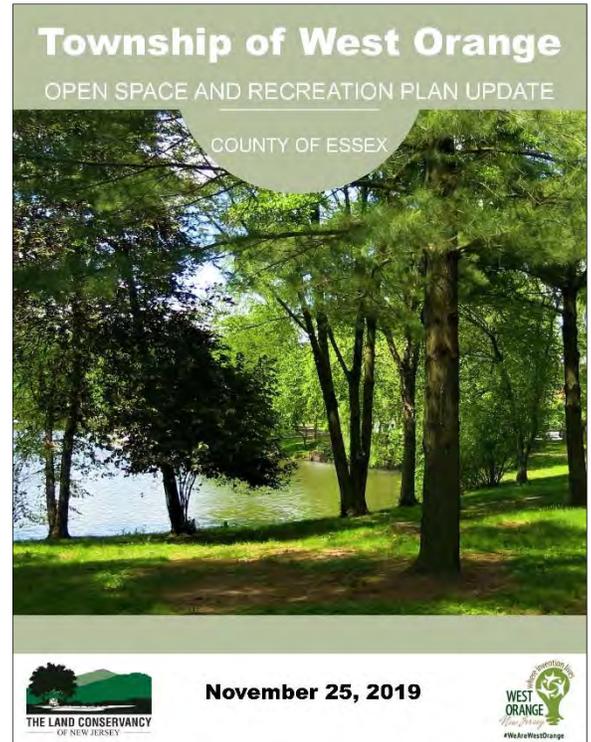
Housing and Neighborhood Preservation

The 2010 report noted that housing prices had dropped in recent years in West Orange along with the rest of the New York Metropolitan region, but that affordability remained a concern. It recommended that the Township should continue to promote maintenance of the existing stock of viable housing,

particularly for low and moderate income households, through code enforcement and rehabilitation programs, as well as giving priority consideration to drainage, sidewalk, curb, safety, and recreation improvements. Also recommended was encouraging connectivity within new and existing neighborhoods, and green design throughout the Township. Since 2010, West Orange has continued to proactively address its affordable housing obligations, and will continue to do so.

Environment and Open Space

It was stated in the 2010 Reexamination Report that West Orange continued to benefit from its large areas of open space, including Township properties, the Essex County Park System and private country clubs. The Master Plan should continue to support efforts to maintain the large open space areas and protection of remaining undeveloped lands that contain environmentally constrained areas. Priority should be given to those properties most valuable for preservation due to sensitive environmental features or other factors, in recognition of some parcels being more appropriate for economic development activity in order to help maintain a balanced tax base. Sustainability measures should be incorporated into the Township’s development regulations and development projects, both public and private. Recommended changes to development regulations are included in the Land Use Element update. As in 2010, the Township’s Open Space and Recreation Plan is being updated concurrently with the Master Plan, and the recommendations of the 2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan should continue to be incorporated into the overall land use policies of the Township.



Land Use

The 2010 Reexamination Report indicated West Orange’s prior land use planning and regulations have produced stable residential neighborhoods and commercial/retail districts. The 2010 Reexamination’s recommendation to maintain established residential and commercial/retail land use patterns through the prudent application of appropriate regulations remains valid. Some zoning changes were recommended to address concerns in both residential and commercial areas, with future development, redevelopment and expansion recommended to occur at reasonable levels of intensity in accordance with the character of existing development. As noted, in instances where redevelopment may involve larger buildings and/or other more intensive development, potential development impacts should be mitigated through appropriate site and building design.

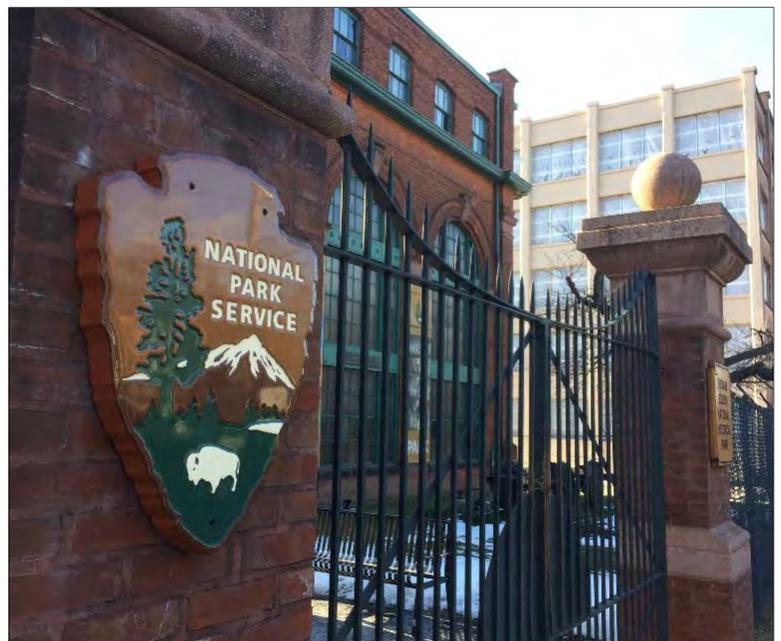
Main Street-Valley Road Corridor

The 2010 report noted that the improvement and revitalization of commercial/retail and residential areas within the Main Street-Valley Road Corridor should continue to be the focus of municipal efforts. Since 2010, the design guidelines for the Special Improvement District have been updated. The implementation of plans for streetscape, parking and façade improvements should continue to be supported. The Redevelopment Plans for two sites in the downtown area (the Edison Battery Factory

and vicinity and the Harvard Press site) have been partially or fully implemented. An additional redevelopment area has been designated, and expansion of the Downtown Redevelopment Area is being considered. Continued emphasis should be placed on development within walking distance of the Highland Avenue train station in Orange.

Economic Development

The 2010 Reexamination Report reaffirmed the encouragement of development that generates employment opportunities and beneficial commercial/retail activity where it is compatible with adjacent land uses, and sensitive natural and environmental features. Development should be balanced by the need to maintain adequate public infrastructure and facilities, services and pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns. Since 2010, there has been significant reinvestment in multiple locations in West Orange, including the Essex Green and K-Mart/Whole Foods shopping centers, the commercial node on Northfield Avenue near Turtle Back Zoo, and the Pleasantdale business district, as well as on Main Street and in the Valley. The Master Plan should continue to support economic development throughout the Township, including through maintenance and revitalization of commercial and office areas. Maintaining a balance between development and preservation remains a goal, given the limited amount of development land remaining in West Orange.



III. The Extent to Which There Have Been Significant Changes in Assumptions, Policies and Objectives Forming the Basis for the Master Plan or Development Regulations as Last Revised

For the most part, the assumptions, policies and objectives which formed the basis for the Township’s Reexamination Report as last revised remain valid at the present time. However, certain changes have occurred that impact West Orange and its planning policies.

A. Demographics

Overall, the population and household characteristics in West Orange have not undergone substantial change since the last Master Plan reexamination in 2010. Nevertheless, there have been minor shifts in growth and occupancy trends.

As indicated in the 2010 Master Plan Update, population in the Township had been experiencing very slight decrease each year from 2004 to 2008. Since 2010, however, population trends have reversed in the Township. There has been an increase in estimated population in each of the past seven years, the largest of which occurred 1.7% between 2016 and 2017. The overall growth rate between 2010 and 2017 was 4.8%.

Estimated Population, Township of West Orange, 2010 to 2017

Year	Residents	Change	
		Number	Percent
2010	46,207	-	-
2011	46,588	381	0.8%
2012	46,726	138	0.3%
2013	47,132	406	0.9%
2014	47,361	229	0.5%
2015	47,498	137	0.3%
2016	47,645	147	0.3%
2017	48,435	790	1.7%
Change, 2010 to 2017		2,228	4.8%

Source: State of New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

The Township’s historical population since 2010 is included in the following table. As shown, West Orange’s population grew steadily from 1900 through 1970, and after declining over the next two decades, it has been growing since 1990.

Historical Population, Township of West Orange, 1900 to 2017

Year	Residents	Change	
		Number	Percent
1900	6,889	--	--
1910	10,980	4,091	59.4%
1920	15,573	4,593	41.8%
1930	24,327	8,754	56.2%
1940	25,662	1,335	5.5%
1950	28,605	2,943	11.5%
1960	39,895	11,290	39.5%
1970	43,715	3,820	9.6%
1980	39,510	-4,205	-9.6%
1990	39,103	-407	-1.0%
2000	44,943	5,840	14.9%
2010	46,207	1,264	2.8%
2017*	48,435	2,228	4.8%

*Estimate

Sources: 2010 West Orange Master Plan Reexamination; State of New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

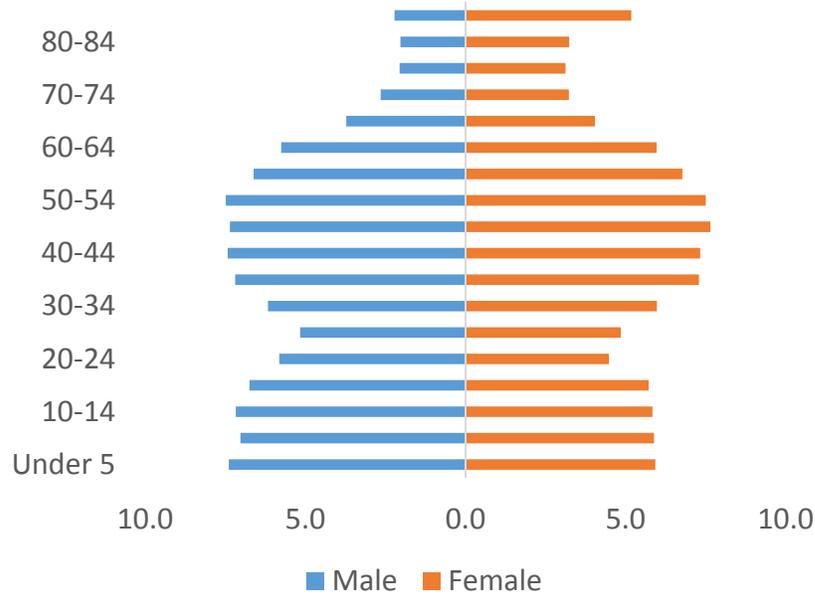
There has been little change in population distribution by age and sex. Median age increased slightly from 40.6 in 2010 to 41.3 in 2016. The male to female ratio increased slightly, as the male population grew by approximately 4.7% and the female population decreased by approximately 0.7% between 2010 and 2016. Similarly, population diversity has remained stable since 2010. The proportion of White and Black populations have increased by about one percent each, while the proportion of the Asian population has decreased by about one percent.

Township of West Orange Median Age and Population Distribution by Sex, 2010-2016

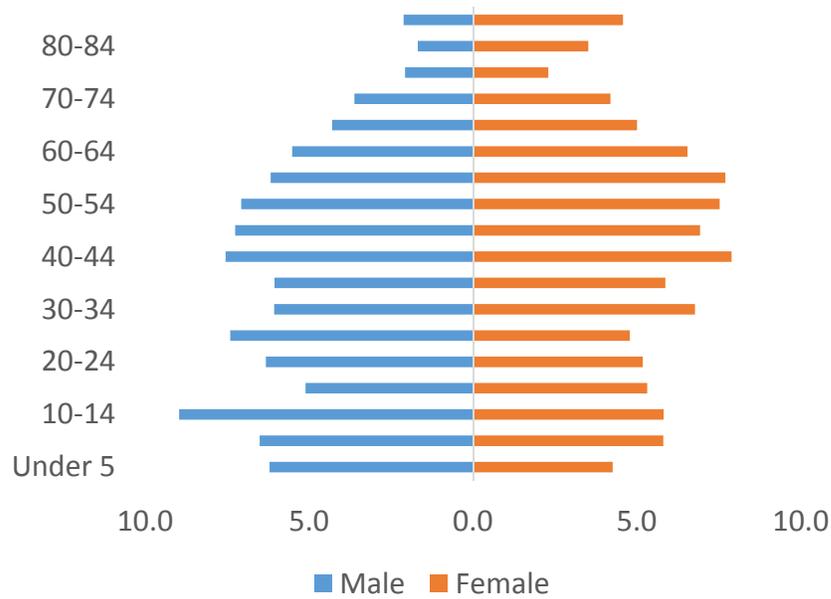
	Median Age	Male	Female
2010	40.6	46.9%	53.1%
2016	41.3	48.2%	51.8%

Source: US Census Bureau

Township of West Orange Population Distribution: Age by Sex, 2010



Township of West Orange Population Distribution: Age by Sex, 2016



Township of West Orange Population Distribution by Race, 2010 and 2016

Race		2010	2016
White alone		57.1%	58.0%
Black or African American alone		26.6%	27.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone		0.4%	0.2%
Asian	Alone	8.0%	7.1%
Asian Indian	Indian	3.0%	2.9%
Chinese		1.5%	1.5%
Filipino		2.2%	1.4%
Japanese		0.1%	0.1%
Korean		0.6%	0.5%
Vietnamese		0.2%	0.2%
Other Asian		0.5%	0.7%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone		0.0%	0.0%
Some other race alone		4.8%	3.1%
Two or more races		3.1%	3.9%

Source: US Census Bureau

According to the US Census Bureau, total households in the Township decreased from 16,790 in 2010 to 16,375 in 2016. At the same time, average household size increased from 2.7 to 2.81. Family households continue to comprise about 70% of all households, while non-family households comprise about 30%. About half of all family households are married couples. Notably, households with individuals 60 years or over comprised 43.1% of all households in 2016, compared to 37.8% in 2010.

West Orange Township Household Type 2010 and 2016

	2010	2016
Total households	16,790	16,375
Family households	70.0%	70.2%
Married-couple family	53.1%	50.2%
Other family	16.9%	20.0%
Nonfamily households	30.0%	29.8%
Householder living alone	25.5%	26.2%
Householder not living alone	4.5%	3.6%
Households with individuals under 18 years	36.7%	34.1%
Households with individuals 60 years and over	37.8%	43.1%
Average household size	2.70	2.81

Source: US Census Bureau

Housing occupancy has decreased slightly since the 2010 Census, from 95.3% occupied to 93.8% occupied in 2016. Of the occupied housing units, the proportion of owner-occupied decreased from 69.7% in 2010 to 66.8% in 2016.

Township of West Orange Housing Occupancy and Tenure, 2010 and 2016

	2010		2016	
Total housing units	17,612		17,458	
Occupied housing units	16,790	95.3%	16,375	93.8%
Owner occupied	11,698	66.4%	10,932	62.6%
Renter occupied	5,092	28.9%	5,443	31.2%
Vacant housing units	822	4.7%	1,083	6.2%

Source: US Census Bureau

B. Development Activity

The following table provides an updated list of residential housing units authorized by building permits from 2010 to 2018. There has been an average of 61.2 residential building permits issued per year in the past nine years, which is slightly lower than the annual average of 68.2 residential building permits from 2004 through 2008 listed in the 2010 Master Plan Update. However, nearly three-quarters of the residential building permits issued in the past nine years were for multifamily units in two years (2016 and 2018). The annual average for one- and two-family units during that time period is 16.8 building permits. During the same nine-year period, demolition permits were issued for only 15 residential units.

Residential Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits, Township of West Orange, 2010-2018

	1 & 2 Family Units	Multifamily Units	Mixed-Use Units	Total Permitted Units	Residential Demolition Permits
2010	64	0	0	64	3
2011	15	0	0	15	0
2012	8	0	0	8	3
2013	13	0	0	13	3
2014	11	0	0	11	2
2015	13	0	1	14	1
2016	7	299	0	306	2
2017	12	0	0	12	0
2018	8	100	0	108	1
Total	151	399	1	551	15

Source: State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Codes and Standards

There has been limited non-residential development activity in West Orange in recent years. As shown in the table below, just over 725,000 square feet of non-residential floor area was authorized for construction in the past nine years. Retail development activity has been especially lacking, with only 5,998 square feet added during this time period. As was the case for demographics, local development activity in West Orange has not experienced any changes with significant impact on long-term development trends.

Non-Residential Space Authorized by Building Permits, Township of West Orange, 2010-2018

	Office	Retail	Other	Total
2010	0	0	18,304	18,304
2011	0	0	55,434	55,434
2012	0	0	22,734	22,734
2013	0	5,998	5,603	11,601
2014	24,557	0	1,364	25,921
2015	30,344	0	96,259	126,603
2016	0	0	217,221	217,221
2017	61,929	0	16,953	78,882
2018	3,470	0	165,025	168,495
Total	120,300	5,998	598,897	725,195

Source: State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Codes and Standards

C. West Orange Public Schools

Enrollment in the West Orange Public Schools has increased somewhat overall in the past ten years, although it has fluctuated somewhat by year, as shown in the following table.

West Orange Public Schools Enrollments, 2008-09 to 2017-18

School Year	Enrollment	Change	
		Number	Percent
2008-09	6,460.0	-	-
2009-10	6,603.0	143	2.2%
2010-11	6,713.0	110	1.7%
2011-12	6,759.5	47	0.7%
2012-13	6,835.0	76	1.1%
2013-14	6,868.0	33	0.5%
2014-15	6,727.0	-141	-2.1%
2015-16	6,681.5	-46	-0.7%
2016-17	6,616.0	-66	-1.0%
2017-18	6,637.5	22	0.3%
Change, 2008-09 to 2017-18		178	2.75%

Source: West Orange Public Schools, New Jersey Department of Education

Additional information regarding schools is provided in the Community Facilities, Utilities and Recycling Plan Element.

D. Changes in Local Land Use, Zoning and Economic Development

Zoning

A Zoning Ordinance Review Committee was created in 2010 to implement zoning recommendations in the 2010 Reexamination. This committee’s work led to an overhaul of the Land Use Regulations Ordinance that was adopted in 2012. A significant change to the development review process was enacted in 2015. The former Technical Review Committee was replaced with a new site plan review advisory board, as permitted by the Municipal Land Use Law. As part of this change, the Land Use Regulations Ordinance was amended to make it clear when site plan approval is required, and to

differentiate between “major” and “minor” site plans. These changes made the review process more predictable, and ensured that all major site plan applications are subject to the same level of scrutiny, whether they are being heard by the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment. Prior to this amendment, changes in occupancy — even for permitted uses — were required to appear before the Technical Review Committee, which added time and expense to the process of opening a new business. In addition, adding the distinction between major and minor site plans allows minor applications to undergo a lesser level of review.

Circulation

The Planning Board adopted a resolution on July 9, 2013 endorsing a “Complete Streets” policy within West Orange. In 2015, the Township created a Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board for the purpose of advising the mayor and Township Council on issues affecting pedestrian safety. In April 2016, the Planning Board formally incorporated the Complete Streets policy into the Master Plan of the Township of West Orange by adopting an amendment to the Circulation Plan Element.

Economic Development

The Downtown Redevelopment project has moved forward, with construction completed of the first phase which includes over 300 residential units, 18,400 square feet of retail and a 630-space parking structure. The development, known as Edison Village, involved the adaptive reuse of the historic Thomas Edison Battery Building and is the largest non-waterfront adaptive-reuse project in New Jersey. The second phase will include over 200 townhouse units.

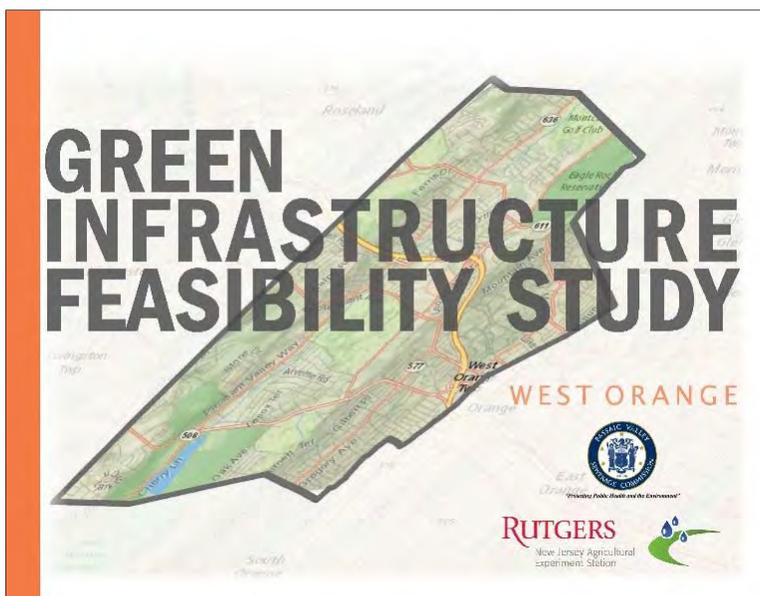
There has been significant development activity both in West Orange and neighboring Orange in the vicinity of the Highland Avenue New Jersey Transit railroad station. The Township designated the former Harvard Press site and adjacent lands as a redevelopment area in 2008, and designated an expanded redevelopment area in 2016. A redevelopment plan was adopted for this redevelopment area and construction is underway on a multifamily residential building.

In 2017, the Township also designated the Essex Green Shopping Center and various properties on Executive Drive and Rooney Circle as a redevelopment area. A redevelopment plan was adopted for a portion of the redevelopment area in 2018.

Some development activity has also taken place in the Township’s neighborhood centers, such as Pleasantdale and Saint Cloud.

Sustainability

The West Orange Township Council recently adopted two resolutions related to this topic. Resolution 242-19, adopted on October 7, 2019, is a land use pledge committing to “continuing good, planned and thoughtful land uses decisions” to make the Township more sustainable. The second, Resolution 246-19, sets forth steps with regard to municipal

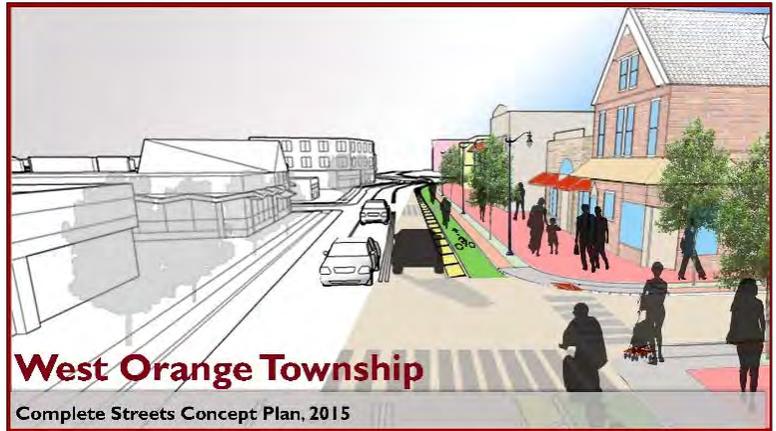


land use decisions “with the intent of making West Orange a truly sustainable community.” This resolution was adopted on October 29, 2019 and discusses the following topics: regional cooperation, transportation choices, natural resource protection, mix of land uses, housing options, green design and municipal facilities siting.

Plans and Studies

A number of documents relevant to planning have been prepared for the Township since 2010. These included the following:

- Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study (2013)
- Complete Streets Concept Plan (2015)
- Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (2015)
- Master Plan Circulation Element Amendment (2016)
- Community Forestry Management Plan (2016)
- Downtown West Orange Alliance Design Guidelines (2017)
- Survey of Older Adults (2018)



Essex County Changes

The County of Essex has been very active in the South Mountain Reservation. In particular, various attractions have been constructed since 2010 that are now collectively referred to as the “South Mountain Recreation Complex.” These include a restaurant, mini-golf course, walkway around the reservoir, paddle-boat launching point and large playground. In 2014, the County reached an agreement with the City of Orange Township to lease the former Orange Reservoir. Within the zoo, development has included a new 12,000-square-foot Education Building, which opened in August 2014, a second parking deck and a larger restaurant. Among the multiple new, renovated and expanded exhibits completed since 2010 are the sea lion facility, Big Cat Country, African Adventure, and sea turtle recovery center. The zoo’s attendance has also been growing, with over 700,000 visitors to the facility in 2016 for the first time in its history.



Thomas Edison National Historical Park

The Thomas Edison National Historical Park is located in downtown West Orange. The following are 2017 figures for the facility, as provided by the National Park Service:

- Total recreation visits: 59,323
- Total visitor spending: \$3,391,700
- Jobs: 42
- Labor income: \$1,914,400
- Value added: \$3,083,300
- Economic output: \$4,639,000
- Percent of visitor spending made by non-local visitors: 95.6%

However, the number of visitors fluctuates annually, as shown in the following table.

Annual Recreation Visitors, Thomas Edison National Historical Park, 2010 to 2018

Year	Visitors	Change	
		Number	Percent
2010	63,009	-	-
2011	55,284	-7,725	-12.3%
2012	52,554	-2,730	-4.9%
2013	46,677	-5,877	-11.2%
2014	51,344	4,667	10.0%
2015	56,317	4,973	9.7%
2016	57,694	1,377	2.4%
2017	59,323	1,629	2.8%
2018	47,297	-12,026	-20.3%

Source: National Park Service Visitor Use Statistics

It is noted that the Laboratory at the National Historical Park had its grand re-opening in 2009-10 after the completion of a \$15 million rehabilitation, which likely explains the spike in visitors in 2010 (there were 27,061 visitors in 2009 and fewer than 10,000 in each of the six prior years).

E. Changes at State Level

Affordable Housing

Significant changes have been made to affordable housing regulation since the last master plan update in 2010. As stated in the previous master plan update, legal challenges were successfully mounted against the Council on Affordable Housing (“COAH”) pertaining to its proposed Third Round rules, leading to several rounds of revisions to the regulations. In 2010, an Appellate Division case invalidated the growth share approach utilized in the Third Round rules and directed COAH to adopt regulations utilizing methodologies similar to the first and second rounds. The New Jersey Supreme Court affirmed the Appellate Division’s decision in 2013. However, COAH failed to adopt newly revised Third Round regulations in October 2014, and was subsequently ruled as effectively dysfunctional by the Supreme Court in 2015. The Court’s decision abolished COAH and returned primary jurisdiction over affordable housing matters to the trial courts.

West Orange Township had prepared a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan that complied with the previous Third Round rules utilizing the growth share approach in 2009. The Township received Substantive Certification from COAH in 2009. In light of Court decision in 2015, the Township reexamined its obligations for affordable housing and adopted an amendment to the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in April 2017 to comply with new obligations determined by the Fair Share Housing Center.

State Development and Redevelopment Plan

In October 2011, the New Jersey State Planning Commission proposed and released the draft State Strategic Plan (“SSP”) as an update to the 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan (“SDRP”). Public hearings were held in February, March and September of 2012. The final draft of the SSP was released in November 2012, proposing the following four overarching goals to guide future planning and development in the state:

- **Goal #1: Targeted Economic Growth** – Enhance opportunities for attraction and growth of industries of statewide and regional importance.
- **Goal #2: Effective Planning for Vibrant Regions** – Guide and inform regional planning so that each region of the State can experience appropriate growth according to the desires and assets of that region.
- **Goal #3: Preservation and Enhancement of Critical State Resources** – Ensure that strategies for growth include preservation of the State’s critical natural, agricultural, scenic, recreation, and historic resources, recognizing the roles they play in sustaining and improving the quality of life for New Jersey residents and attracting economic growth.
- **Goal #4: Tactical Alignment of Government** – Enable effective resource allocation, coordination, cooperation and communication among those who play a role in meeting the mission of this Plan.

Unlike the 2001 SDRP, the SSP did not contain maps or designate planning areas. In November 2012, the State Planning Commission voted to table the adoption of the plan until amendments could be made to address the impacts of Superstorm Sandy that had occurred in October of the same year. The draft State Strategic Plan has not been adopted at this time.

Local Redevelopment and Housing Law

In 2013, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (“LRHL”) was amended to permit the designation of a redevelopment area with or without condemnation powers. The amendment set forth requirements for a municipality to indicate, in the resolution authorizing preliminary investigation, whether the redevelopment area designation will allow the exercise of eminent domain:

The resolution authorizing the planning board to undertake a preliminary investigation shall state whether the redevelopment area determination shall authorize the municipality to use all those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area other than the use of eminent domain (hereinafter referred to as a “Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area”) or whether the redevelopment area determination shall authorize the municipality to use all those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area, including the power of eminent domain (hereinafter referred to as a “Condemnation Redevelopment Area”).

The amendment also established additional notice requirements, and modified conditions necessary for an area in need of rehabilitation designation.

The LRHL was further amended in August 2019 to expand the criteria for redevelopment area designation to include shopping centers and office parks with significant vacancies as properties that qualify as areas in need of redevelopment.

Amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law

Time of Decision (2010)

In May, 2010, Governor Christie signed P.L. 2010 C.9 into law, effectively nullifying the “time of decision” rule, which had previously allowed municipalities the ability to alter zoning requirements even after an application for development had been filed but before a formal decision on the application had been rendered. P.L. 2010 C.9 provides that the development regulations applicable to a property at the time an application and any decision made pertaining to it. P.L. 2010 C.9 became effective on May 5, 2011.

Extension of Time between Reexamination Reports (2011)

The MLUL was amended in 2011 to extend the maximum time permitted between municipal master plan reexamination reports from six years to ten years.

State of New Jersey Energy Master Plan (2011)

New Jersey’s most recent Energy Master Plan (“EMP”) was released by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) in December 2011 (“2011 EMP”). It outlined the State’s strategic vision for the use, management, and development of energy in New Jersey over the next decade. It further serves as a guide to the present and future energy needs of the State. The 2011 EMP was updated in December 2015 (“EMP Update”). Included in the EMP Update were measures of the State’s progress toward achieving the 2011 EMP goals. Where circumstances have changed, the update made adjustments to certain goals. The EMP Update also included a new section to address the challenges to New Jersey’s energy infrastructure identified in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy and how the State is addressing those challenges.

Exemption of Applications for Co-Location of Wireless Communications Equipment on a Tower (2012)

The MLUL was amended in 2012 under N.J.S.A. 40:55D-46.2 so as to provide that an “application for development to collocate wireless communications equipment on a wireless communications support structure or in an existing equipment compound not be subject to site plan review” provided the application meets the following requirements: the wireless support structure shall have been previously approved by the appropriate approving authority; the collocation shall not increase the overall height of the support structure by more than 10 percent, nor increase the width of the support structure, nor increase the existing equipment compound to more than 2,500 square feet; and the collocation shall comply with all of the terms and conditions of the original approval and not trigger the need for variance relief.

Exemption of Solar Panels from Impervious Coverage Calculation (2014)

The MLUL was amended in 2014 through Bill S.921/A.2289 to exempt solar panels and canopies or arrays thereof from impervious coverage calculations as part of subdivision or site plan approval.

Statement of Strategy (2018)

In January 2018, Governor Christie signed into law an amendment to the MLUL at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28b(2) to require any new Land Use Element of a municipality's Master Plan to incorporate "a statement of strategy concerning: (i) smart growth which, in part, shall consider potential locations for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations, (ii) storm resiliency with respect to energy supply, flood-prone areas, and environmental infrastructure, and (iii) environmental sustainability"

F. Other Changes to Consider

A master plan should take into account broader issues and trends that may impact development and quality of life. Four particular ones that are considered in this reexamination and the topical plan elements are as follows:

- Real estate market: Housing prices have fluctuated in the past decade. There has also been demand for different residential options, including multifamily units, changes in the size and layout of multifamily and different features in single-family homes. These changes are also driven in part by demographic trends and lifestyle preference. The diversification of the Township's housing stock is being addressed somewhat through new units in redevelopment areas.
- Retail: A more dramatic shift with long-term consequences is the changing nature of shopping, and its impact on physical retail stores. Many once-strong retailers, from national chains to local shops, have faded or disappeared. A major factor in this change is the continuing growth of online commerce. As such, retail is focusing more on experience, with dining and activities becoming anchors in place of department stores.
- Technology: The role of technology goes beyond changes in how people shop. The rise of smartphones and social media have transformed how residents stay informed, participate in decision making, share information and utilize services.
- Transportation: Land use and transportation are interrelated, with one impacting the other. Since the adoption of the Township's last reexamination, there have been changes such as the emergence of ride sharing services (e.g. Lyft, Uber) as common, which has affected travel patterns as well as businesses (e.g. taxi and car services). In densely developed areas, bike sharing and scooter services are becoming a common option. There has also been interest in "complete streets," and greater focus on pedestrian safety and bicycling. Looking ahead, perhaps by the next reexamination, autonomous vehicles will be commonplace, and there will likely be other advances in circulation that will need to be considered.

IV. Specific Changes Recommended for the Master Plan and Development Regulations

A. Introduction

Based on the assumptions, policies and objectives discussed above, a number of specific changes are being recommended for the master plan and development regulations as part of this reexamination report. The recommended master plan/zoning changes are included in the plan element updates appended to this reexamination, and are summarized below.

B. 2019 Master Plan Objectives

The West Orange Master Plan incorporates and endorses the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law set forth at NJSA 40:55D-2, as its overall goals and objectives, which are supplemented by more community-specific goals. The major planning objectives of the West Orange Master Plan as established by the 2019 Reexamination are set forth below.

1. Guide Appropriate Long Range Development of Lands within the Township through a Continual Planning Process.
2. Ensure that the Public's Safety Is Secured
3. Provide and Preserve Adequate Light, Air and Open Space
4. Ensure Compatibility with the Development and General Welfare of Other Jurisdictions
5. Encourage the Preservation of Neighborhoods and the Environment
6. Encourage Coordination of Public Development with Land Use Policies
7. Provide Sufficient Space for Balanced Growth and Development
8. Ensure Safe and Efficient Transportation and Circulation Routes and Promote Complete Streets Principles Where Possible
9. Promote a Desirable Visual Environment
10. Promote the Preservation of Historic Structures and Places
11. Encourage Economic Development, Redevelopment and Rehabilitation in Downtown and Other Commercial Areas That Is Compatible with the Character of the Township
12. Provide for the Housing Needs of Senior Citizens and Low and Moderate Income Households
13. Improve and Maintain Existing Residential Neighborhoods
14. Promote Community Sustainability and Resiliency
15. Coordinate Public and Private Procedures and Activities
16. Utilize Available Federal, State and County Level Funding Sources

C. 2019 Master Plan Principles

1. *Encourage Appropriate Residential Development*

“Appropriate residential development” can vary in different locations and contexts throughout the Township. In particular, mixed-use development that includes multifamily residential is appropriate in various commercial districts and other developed locations in the Township, while neighborhoods comprised of single-family detached housing at lower densities should remain unchanged, while allowing for upgrading of the housing stock. Higher density multifamily residential development is also appropriate in limited locations adequately served by transit stations, transportation networks and other infrastructure. Senior and specialized housing options should be supported as well, as long as potential development impacts are addressed. This principle should not be construed, however, as supporting increased densities and out-of-scale development in established residential neighborhoods.

2. *Properly Locate Public, Commercial/Retail, Industrial, Residential and Service Uses*

The Master Plan should continue to emphasize the need to locate public, commercial/retail, industrial, residential and service uses at sites and locations which are suitable for their use environmentally, economically, and geographically, and can be adequately serviced by public infrastructure.

3. *Protect Natural Features and Environmental Resources*

Continue to protect natural features and environmental resources including, but not limited to, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, ridgelines, and areas valuable as scenic, historical, cultural, or recreational resources.

4. *Maintain the Appropriate Scale of the Community*

While in many locations keeping existing development patterns intact is appropriate, there are instances where redevelopment may involve larger buildings and/or other more intensive development. There are locations in West Orange that have experienced changes in population density and development patterns. Some of these areas will continue to change to meet the diversity of demand and trends in commercial and residential development, such as transit-oriented and mixed-use development. In such cases, potential development impacts should be mitigated through appropriate site and building design.

D. Other Recommended Master Plan and Zoning Changes

Various amendments are proposed to the Master Plan, as described in the plan elements section of this document. These can be summarized as follows:

- Consider changes to permitted uses:
 - Modify permitted uses in commercial zones, in recognition of market changes for retail and other uses. Recommended changes include allowing limited medical uses in P-C zone (e.g. urgent care, physical therapy) and adding fitness centers/health clubs as a permitted use in commercial zones.
 - Permit microbreweries, distilleries and wineries in appropriate locations, which have become more commonplace and can be located in a range of settings.

- Evaluate whether there are locations appropriate to permit medical cannabis production and/or sales (or places where it should be prohibited), in advance of potential future change in laws to permit recreational production and sales.
- Permit drive-through windows as customarily accessory use for banks, fast food and pharmacies (with standards for vehicle stacking etc.)
- Modify zone district designations:
 - Rezone the stables currently located in the O-R zone to R-1, consistent with other recreation and open space properties throughout West Orange, while encouraging this property's preservation for recreational purposes or open space.
 - Cedar Avenue and adjacent parcels by Mayapple Hill should be included in the R-1 zone, consistent with 2010 Master Plan Update recommendations and subsequent rezoning of abutting properties.
 - Place the residential parcel zoned OB-2 on Eagle Ridge Way in the R-1 zone, consistent with single-family residential lots on opposite side of street.
 - Change the zoning on the west side of Main Street between Llewelyn Park and the Thomas Edison National Historical Park parking lot from OB-1 to B-1, consistent with existing land uses and desired future use.
 - The office property on the southwest corner of the intersection of Mount Pleasant Avenue and Pleasant Valley Way should be rezoned from R-4 to B-2, consistent with its existing use and zoning on the north side of Mount Pleasant Avenue.
 - Rezone the Cambria hotel property on Rooney Circle from P-C to B-2, to place it in the same zone as the Courtyard hotel immediately adjacent to its east.
 - Rezone certain lots along Mellon Avenue from R-2 to R-5, consistent with the adjoining neighborhood, and remove the Conservation Overlay designation from properties fronting on this street, as detailed in the Land Use Plan Element Amendment.
- Review and modify standards for mixed-use development, particularly for downtown setting (e.g. difficult to provide parking on small sites)
- Permit mixed-use development and multifamily residential in certain business districts and other focus areas.
- Consider "form-based" zoning in certain areas to encourage high-quality redevelopment
- Modify regulations for accessible ramps to single- and two-family houses (e.g. provide standards such as setbacks and length)
- Modify the requirements for provision of trees in parking lots, with different regulations for small and large lots.
- Look into changes to minimum parking standards, particularly for downtown and the Valley as well as mixed-use developments.
- Update and improve lighting standards in the Land Use Regulations Ordinance.
- Amend administrative and procedural regulations for development application requirements, referrals to boards and commissions and for expiration of approvals.
- Provide guiding principles and recommended future land uses for the Rock Spring Club property, which was recently acquired by the Township.

V. Recommendations of the Planning Board Concerning the Incorporation of Redevelopment Plans into the Land Use Element and Local Development Regulations

A master plan reexamination report is required to include recommendations of the Planning Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans (adopted pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law of 1992) into the land use element, and accompanying changes, if any, to the development regulations. The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) affords municipalities the authority to designate areas “in need of redevelopment,” provided they meet specific statutory criteria. The LRHL also enables municipalities to designate areas “in need of rehabilitation” in accordance with other criteria. Municipalities may prepare and implement redevelopment plans for both redevelopment and rehabilitation areas. The remainder of this chapter describes existing redevelopment plans in West Orange as well as certain areas being considered for potential redevelopment area designation.

There are six areas of the Township of West Orange that have been determined to qualify as redevelopment areas.

Downtown Redevelopment Area

An area located along Main Street in the northeastern section of the Township was declared an area in need of redevelopment by the Township Council in 2002. The Downtown Redevelopment Plan was adopted by the Township Council in February 2003, and was amended in July 2006 and February 2007. The Downtown Redevelopment plan provides guidelines and regulations for the redevelopment of the Edison Storage Battery Building and its surrounding area. This plan took some time to be implemented due to factors including the economic climate soon after adoption of the plan revisions, but it has since moved forward. Phase 1 has been completed and Phase 2 has recently moved into the approvals phase. This plan remains valid and is consistent with the Township’s desire to promote the redevelopment of this section of West Orange.

In May 2019, the Township Council adopted a resolution authorizing the Planning Board to investigate whether 23 additional parcels on the east side of Main Street between Babcock Place and Washington Street qualify as an area in need of redevelopment.

Organon Redevelopment Area

A redevelopment area investigation was conducted in early 2006 for an approximately 11-acre area located on the north side of Mount Pleasant Avenue just west of its intersection with Prospect Avenue. In July 2006, the Township Council declared the area “in need of redevelopment,” subsequent to which a redevelopment plan was prepared and adopted. The Organon Redevelopment Plan encourages the redevelopment of the redevelopment area for non-residential uses, but allows for residential uses in certain instances. This redevelopment plan has been implemented with non-residential development.

Valley Road Area (Harvard Press) Redevelopment Area

In early 2008, an area comprised of five tax parcels located between Central Avenue and Mitchell Street along West Orange’s border with the City of Orange was determined to be in need of redevelopment. These parcels are part of a larger property that includes additional land in Orange. A redevelopment plan was prepared for the Valley Road Area (Harvard Press) Redevelopment Area in April 2008. This plan has been implemented through the construction of a multifamily residential development. A recommendation for the Township to consider expanding this redevelopment area to include nearby

properties also was implemented with the creation of the Central Avenue Redevelopment Plan discussed below.

Central Avenue Redevelopment Area

This redevelopment area is comprised of six lots. One of these is adjacent to the Harvard Press Redevelopment Area, and the other five are in the vicinity. All but one of these lots are located between Central Avenue and Mitchell Street to the west of the Harvard Press site. The sixth lot is located on the south side of Mitchell Street and the east side of Tompkins Street. In 2016, these tax parcels were determined to be in need of redevelopment. A redevelopment plan was prepared for this redevelopment area in December 2016, and was adopted by the Township Council in January 2017. This plan is consistent with other planning efforts in the vicinity in West Orange and Orange, and takes advantage of proximity to the Highland Avenue railroad station.

Essex Green/Executive Drive Redevelopment Area

The Essex Green/Executive Drive Redevelopment Area consists of five parcels totaling approximately 62 acres in area, which were determined to be an area in need of redevelopment in January 2018. A redevelopment plan was adopted by the Township Council for part of this redevelopment area in September 2018, and for the remainder of this redevelopment area in June 2019. The redevelopment area designation was the subject of a legal challenge, which was rejected by the Superior Court of New Jersey in early 2019. An appeal of the Superior Court's decision upholding the redevelopment area designation was filed with the Appellate Division, but has not yet been decided.



46 Mount Pleasant Avenue Redevelopment Area

This area, consisting of one tax lot on which the West Orange Public Library is located and a portion of a Township of West Orange public street that is used as a parking lot, was designated as an area in need of redevelopment in early 2019. The Planning Board notes this redevelopment area only includes a portion of the Township properties in this area, and that a comprehensive redevelopment of the parking lot for Town Hall, Police Headquarters and the Public Library should be considered. A redevelopment plan for this redevelopment area was adopted by the Township Council in July 2019.

PLAN ELEMENT AMENDMENTS

I. Land Use

A. Introduction

The Township of West Orange is an essentially fully developed suburban municipality. Yet it continues to redevelop as its neighborhoods and commercial areas evolve. In recent years, new housing units have been created, office buildings have been renovated and expanded and retail centers rejuvenated through reinvestment. This development activity has been scrutinized due to potential impacts on community character and circulation. This Land Use Plan Element Amendment is intended to guide future development and redevelopment within the Township and address particular areas of concern in regard to land use, development and zoning. It includes recommendations for changes in zoning classifications, permitted uses and other aspects of West Orange's land development ordinances.

B. Existing Conditions and Issues

Map 1 documents existing land uses within West Orange. It is an update of the Existing Land Use map in the 2010 Master Plan Update based upon construction known to have occurred, field surveys and review of tax records. While land use patterns in the Township have generally been set in place for some time, there have been some changes that have occurred in recent years, as properties have been redeveloped and limited remaining vacant parcels have been developed. Notable changes include redevelopment of former industrial parcels in the downtown on Main Street and Central Avenue, the purchase of Rock Spring Club by the Township and replacement of former office and restaurant properties with commercial uses.

Map 2 shows existing zoning districts. There have been zoning changes affecting properties throughout West Orange in the past decade, a number of which were recommended by the 2010 Master Plan Update. Existing development in West Orange is generally consistent with zoning, although there are deviations due to changes in zoning that made preexisting uses nonconforming or by use variance approval. It was stated in the 2010 Update that there were areas where uses that were once prevalent are no longer as viable from a market perspective. This issue remains valid, particularly in formerly industrial areas of the municipality.

This plan element addresses opportunities and areas of concern discussed in the Reexamination Report, as well as other issues raised during the process of preparing this Master Plan Update. These are discussed in the following section, along with recommendations for addressing them. The recommendations of this plan element provide the policy basis for changes to municipal documents in order to further the overall objectives of the West Orange Master Plan as expressed in the Reexamination Report.

C. Recommendations

Land Use Regulations Ordinance

A comprehensive review of the Land Use Regulations Ordinance was completed and adopted by the Township in 2012, implementing one of the primary recommendations of the 2010 Land Use Plan Element Update. However, there are issues that have arisen in recent years that warrant consideration in this current document. The following are potential recommendations for changes to portions of the Land Use Regulations Ordinance:

- Consider changes to permitted uses:
 - Modify permitted uses in commercial zones, in recognition of market changes for retail and other nonresidential uses. Recommended changes include allowing limited medical uses in the P-C zone (e.g. urgent care, physical therapy) and adding fitness centers/health clubs as a permitted use in commercial zones. Other potential uses include “experiential” retail and activities, such as arcades, arts and crafts studios, stores that integrate dining, coffee and/or bar areas and home design showrooms.
 - Permit microbreweries, distilleries and wineries in appropriate locations. These types of uses have become more prevalent in recent years in New Jersey due to changes in state laws, and can be economic development drivers. A unique characteristic of these uses is that they can be successfully located in a variety of locations, ranging from industrial parks to downtown storefronts, and still attract patrons. Zoning districts in West Orange where these uses could be permitted include the planned commercial, business and industrial zones, as well as the Downtown and Executive Drive/Essex Green redevelopment areas.
 - Evaluate whether there are locations appropriate to permit medical cannabis production and/or sales, or places where it should be prohibited, in advance of potential future change in laws to permit recreational production and sales. An appropriate means of regulating these uses could be by only allowing them as conditional uses in certain zoning districts. Conditional use standards could include distance requirements from sensitive uses such as schools. Zoning districts in West Orange where these uses could be permitted as conditional uses could include certain business, office building and industrial zones for dispensaries, as well as the Industrial zone for production.
 - Permit drive-through windows as customarily accessory use for banks, fast food and pharmacies (with standards for vehicle stacking etc.).
- Modify zone district boundaries as shown on Map 3:
 - Horse stables on Woodland Avenue: This facility is a unique resource within West Orange, as its patrons can utilize an underpass beneath Prospect Avenue to access trails within Eagle Rock Reservation. It is recommended that this use remains, and if not, it is recommended that it be preserved as open space and/or for recreational use. However, in the event the property were to be redeveloped in the future, it is currently located in the O-R zone. It is recommended this property be rezoned to R-1, the same zone as other recreation and open space facilities throughout the Township, as potential redevelopment with uses permitted in the O-R zone would be more impactful on surrounding residential parcels.
 - Cedar Avenue and adjacent parcels by Mayapple Hill: These should be included in the R-1 zone, consistent with 2010 Master Plan Update recommendations and subsequent rezoning.
 - Residential parcel zoned OB-2 on Eagle Ridge Way: Rezone to R-1, consistent with single-family residential lots on the opposite side of the street.
 - West side of Main Street between Llewelyn Park and the Thomas Edison National Historical Park parking lot: Rezone from OB-1 to B-1, consistent with existing land uses and desired future uses.
 - Office property on southwest corner of intersection of Mount Pleasant Avenue and Pleasant Valley Way: Rezone from R-4 to B-2, consistent with its existing use and zoning on north side of Mount Pleasant Avenue.
 - Cambria hotel property on Rooney Circle: rezone from P-C to B-2. Property would be only remaining one in this section of P-C zone, as the remainder is now part of a redevelopment area. It also would be same zoning as the Courtyard hotel immediately adjacent to the east.

- Rezone certain lots along Mellon Avenue from R-2 to R-5, consistent with the adjoining neighborhood, and remove the Conservation Overlay designation from properties fronting on this street. There is a mix of private and Township-owned parcels in this area, which are located along a public street that is already partially improved. These changes would provide appropriate zoning for the properties in this area in terms of established land use patterns without significant impacts on the remainder of the Conservation Overlay Zone in this area. The Planning Board strongly recommends that the removal of this limited portion from the Conservation Overlay Zone be offset by adding land to the zone elsewhere in the Township, such as on the recently acquired Rock Spring Club property, within two years. Ideally the amount of land added to the Conservation Overlay Zone would be at least twice as much as the amount being removed.
- Review and modify standards for mixed-use development, particularly for downtown settings (e.g. difficult to provide parking on small sites).
- Permit mixed-use development and multifamily residential in certain business districts.
- Consider “form-based” zoning in certain areas to encourage high-quality redevelopment.
- Modify regulations for accessible ramps to single- and two-family houses (e.g. provide standards such as setbacks and length).
- Update and improve lighting standards in the Land Use Regulations Ordinance.
- Incorporate non-structural stormwater management and other recommendations from the 2013 Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study into the Land Use Regulations Ordinance and in new development and redevelopment projects.
- Support land uses and development design that promote “aging in place” for older adults, and undertake other measures that support the Township’s Senior Livability Initiative.
- Modify the requirements for provision of trees in parking lots, with different regulations for small and large lots.
- Look into changes to parking standards:
 - Provide more flexibility in terms of parking ratios, particularly in the downtown.
 - Evaluate mixed-use development and shared parking standards.
 - The Land Use Regulations Ordinance currently requires a minimum of one parking space for a single-family home to be a garage space. While it is no realistic way to enforce that all garages are actually used for automobile parking, the Planning Board believes this requirement should remain in place and that garages should not be converted to additional living space.
- Possible changes to administrative and procedural regulations:
 - Determine whether variances and other approvals should expire.
 - Clarify application referrals from Planning and Zoning Boards to the Historic Preservation Commission, Environmental Commission, Township Forester, Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board and other others.
 - Determine which are formal versus informal reviews/referral.
 - Better communications and feedback with both Essex County and the State.

Focus Areas

Downtown/Main Street

- Support existing businesses and residential uses.
- Promote additional residential uses.
- Improve the safety and appearance of Main Street, Washington Street, Harrison Avenue and other major streets.
- Encourage uses and development that support Thomas Edison National Historical Park as well as benefit from its presence on Main Street.
- Promote the benefits of the Downtown West Orange Alliance Design Guidelines.

Valley/Highland Avenue Station Area

- Support arts entities, as well as existing businesses and residential uses.
- Promote additional residential uses, with higher densities closer to Highland Avenue Station.
- Improve the safety and appearance of Valley Road, Central Avenue, South Valley Road, Quinby Place and other major streets.
- Promote the benefits of the Downtown West Orange Alliance Design Guidelines, and provide design guidelines for areas outside the special improvement district.

Essex Green/Executive Drive Area

- Allow for a broader mix of uses.
- Better integrate the mix of uses in this area.
- Provide connectivity between commercial and office uses, as well as with surrounding residential areas.

Pleasantdale

- Support existing businesses.
- Better connect surrounding neighborhoods to the business area.
- Improve the safety and appearance of Pleasant Valley Way and Eagle Rock Avenue, and in particular the intersection of these two streets.
- Provide additional civic/open space.

St. Cloud

- Continue to upgrade uses and the appearance of development.
- Promote uses complementary to the Essex County facilities in South Mountain Reservation.
- Recognize this area as a transit-oriented location, due to the presence of the bus station adjacent to Codey Arena.

Rock Spring Property

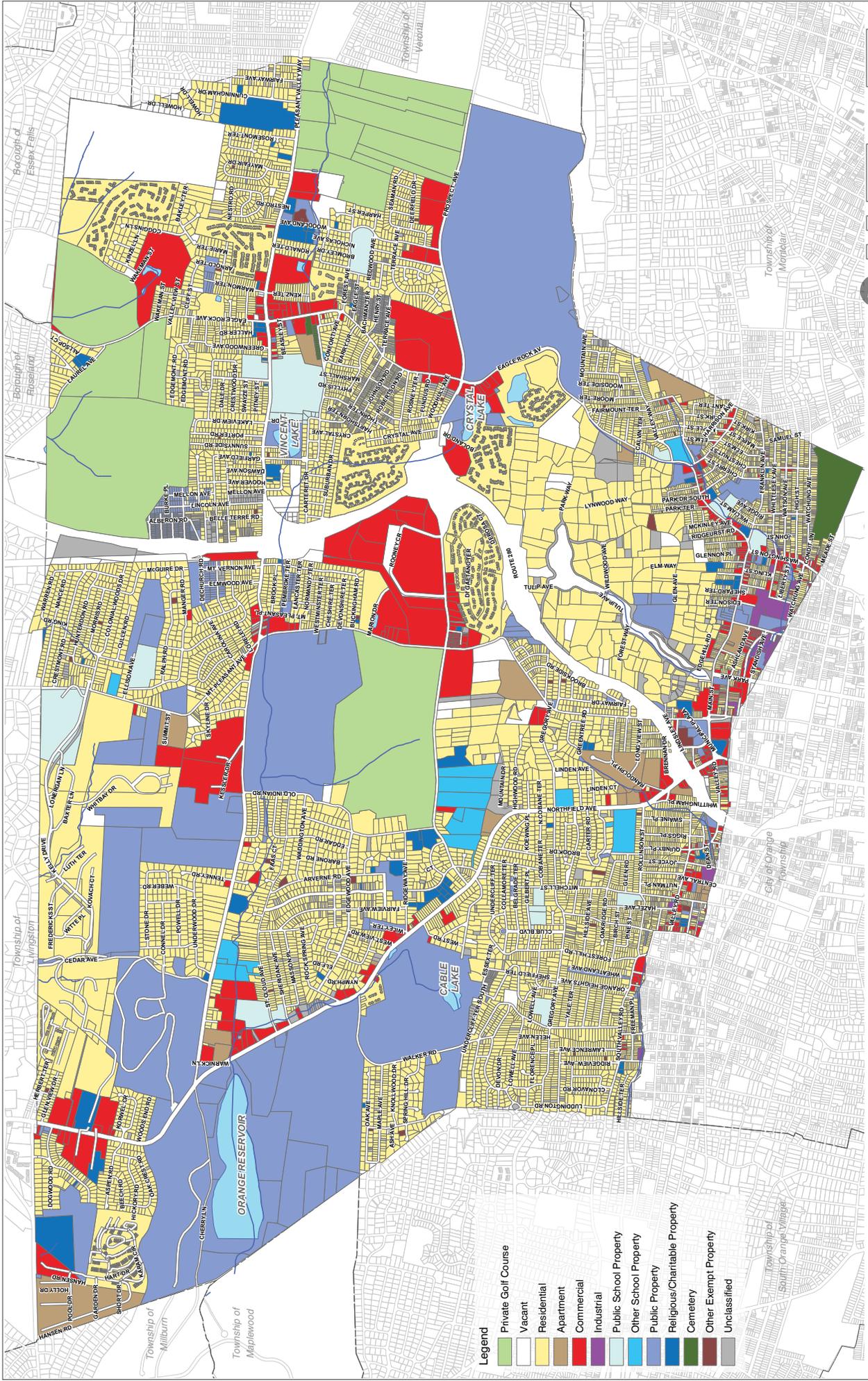
- Maintain a substantial open space component.
- Place a portion of the property within the Conservation Overlay Zone.

- Provide additional recreation facilities.
- Consider office and potentially commercial along the Northfield Avenue frontage.
- Allow limited residential as needed to address part of the Township's affordable housing obligation.

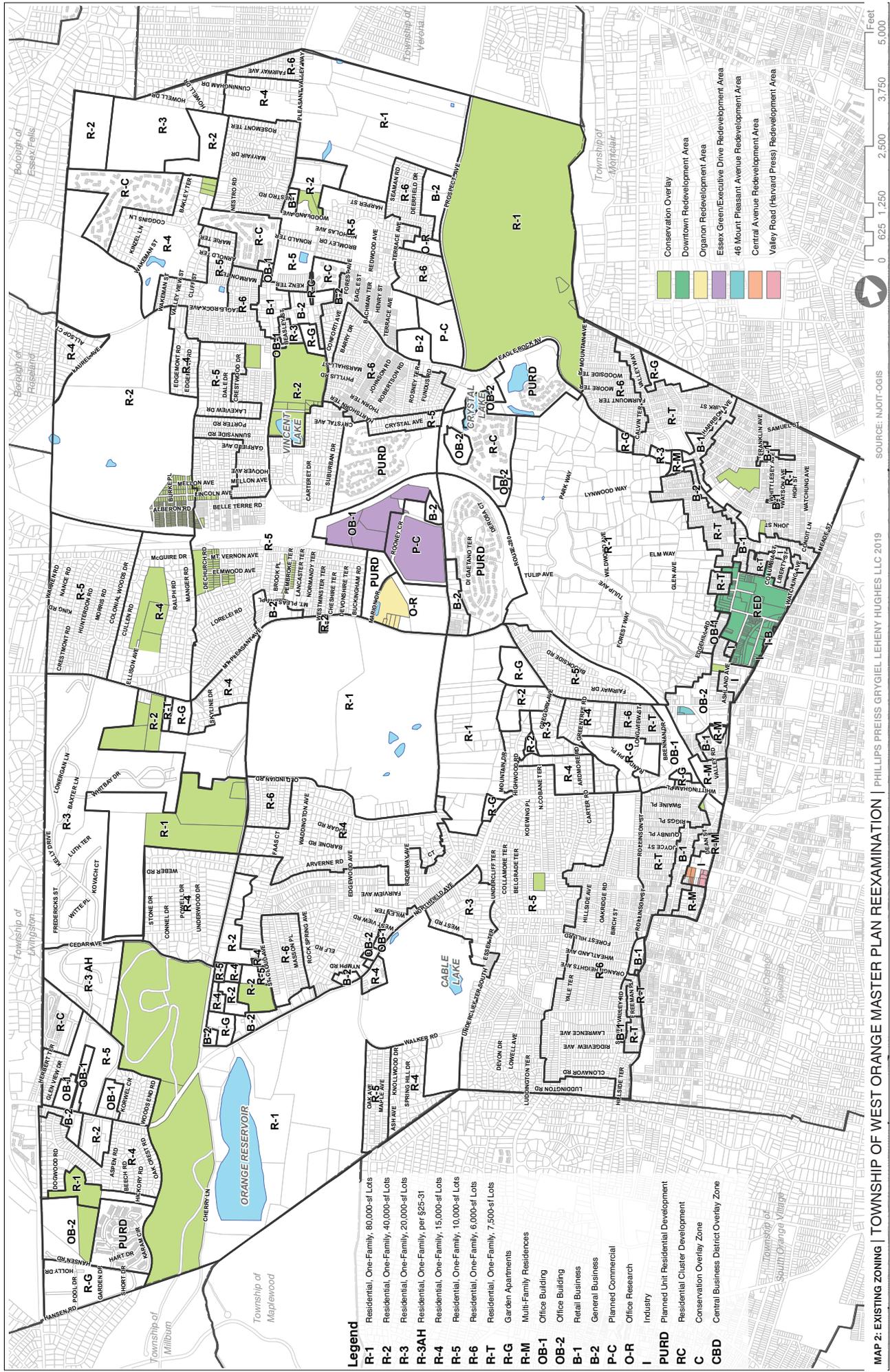
Sustainability

The Municipal Land Use Law was recently amended to require any land use element of a municipality's Master Plan to include "a statement of strategy concerning: (i) smart growth which, in part, shall consider potential locations for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations, (ii) storm resiliency with respect to energy supply, flood-prone areas, and environmental infrastructure, and (iii) environmental sustainability." West Orange adopted its first Sustainability Plan Element in 2010. Since then, a Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study was prepared for the Township in 2013, the municipality has applied for Sustainable Jersey certification and this current Master Plan document also updates the Sustainability Plan Element.

The West Orange Township Council recently adopted two resolutions pertaining to this topic. Resolution 242-19, adopted on October 7, 2019, is a land use pledge committing to "continuing good, planned and thoughtful land uses decisions" to make the Township more sustainable. The second, Resolution 246-19, sets forth steps with regard to municipal land use decisions "with the intent of making West Orange a truly sustainable community." This resolution was adopted on October 29, 2019 and discusses the following topics: regional cooperation, transportation choices, natural resource protection, mix of land uses, housing options, green design and municipal facilities siting. Both resolutions were then provided to all members of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Environmental Commission, Open Space and Recreation Commission and Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board.



- Legend**
- Private Golf Course
 - Vacant
 - Residential
 - Apartment
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Public School Property
 - Other School Property
 - Public Property
 - Religious/Charitable Property
 - Cemetery
 - Other Exempt Property
 - Unclassified



- Conservation Overlay
- Downtown Redevelopment Area
- Orlanon Redevelopment Area
- Essex Green/Executive Drive Redevelopment Area
- 46 Mount Pleasant Avenue Redevelopment Area
- Central Avenue Redevelopment Area
- Valley Road (Harvard Press) Redevelopment Area



SOURCE: NJOT-OGIS

Legend

- R-1 Residential, One-Family, 80,000-sf Lots
- R-2 Residential, One-Family, 40,000-sf Lots
- R-3 Residential, One-Family, 20,000-sf Lots
- R-3AH Residential, One-Family, per \$25-31
- R-4 Residential, One-Family, 15,000-sf Lots
- R-5 Residential, One-Family, 10,000-sf Lots
- R-6 Residential, One-Family, 6,000-sf Lots
- R-T Residential Cluster Development
- R-G Garden Apartments
- R-M Multi-Family Residences
- OB-1 Office Building
- OB-2 Office Building
- B-1 Retail Business
- B-2 General Business
- P-C Planned Commercial
- O-R Office Research
- I Industry
- PURD Planned Unit Residential Development
- RC Residential Cluster Development
- C Conservation Overlay Zone
- CBD Central Business District Overlay Zone

II. Economic Development

A. Introduction

West Orange has a diverse economic base which includes commercial centers, office complexes, mixed-use areas and recreation and tourism attractions. While changes in market preferences have affected demand for certain uses, reinvestment and redevelopment have occurred throughout the Township. Maintaining and expanding the nonresidential tax base is a primary objective to keep West Orange a desirable place to live and work in, as well as to visit. There are also opportunities from the presence of an Interstate highway running through West Orange and train stations just beyond its borders. This plan element builds upon the recommendations of the 2010 plan element and provides additional ideas for general and specific improvements to the Township's economic base.

B. Issues and Opportunities

- There are economic development opportunities in the Highland Avenue Station area. This New Jersey Transit railroad station is the closest to West Orange. Other stations on the Morris and Essex Lines with more frequent service than Highland Avenue station have seen growth and redevelopment within reasonable walking distance. New residential development in both Orange and West Orange in the vicinity of this station will be the catalyst for increased service by New Jersey Transit, which in turn will enhance the desirability of this station area for future development. Challenges will include maintaining a balance of land uses (i.e. providing adequate stores and services for residents), preventing displacement of existing residents and businesses, and managing increases in traffic and demand for parking.
- Thomas Edison National Historical Park, located in downtown West Orange, is an attraction and economic development driver. The Park includes former workshop and factory buildings on Main Street, as well as the Glenmont estate in Llewelyn Park.
 - The Park brings in 60,000 visitors a year, plus staff, volunteers, etc.
 - An economic impact study by the National Park Service estimates the Park generates \$4 million per year in economic activity.
 - Huge opportunity, particularly for ground floor retail in redevelopment.
- Downtown West Orange Alliance (DWOA) has been focused has been on building and promoting businesses along Main Street corridor and elsewhere in downtown.
 - The DWOA adopted Design Guidelines for downtown in 2017. This user-friendly document promotes more attractive building design and renovations.
 - It is also assisting new businesses. For example, in recent years, DWOA has given applicants and potential new businesses a “warmer place to land,” as one of its representatives put it.
 - DWOA was recently awarded a Main Street New Jersey grant – one of 17 downtown district organizations in the state to receive one to assist municipalities with downtown and neighborhood revitalization projects.
 - The \$20,250 grant is to improve the alley connecting a rear parking lot to Main Street in the St. Mark's section of downtown.
 - The Township is creating “Edison Alley” with work including walkway repairs, addition of a mural, providing new lighting and outdoor tables and chairs.
- There has been growth and investment along Northfield Avenue in the vicinity of Turtle Back Zoo in recent years. This development both supports and benefits from County investment in this section of West Orange.

- A Survey of Older Adults conducted for the Township in 2018 identifies a number of ways to improve West Orange of senior citizens and other older residents. The Township is implementing these recommendations through the West Orange Senior Livability Initiative. There are business opportunities for providing services to assist and cater to this segment of the population.

C. Recommendations

General

- Continue to maintain a balance of land uses.
- Encourage supporting services for open space, recreation and tourism attractions.
- Modify zoning as appropriate to allow for varied nonresidential uses.
- Provide for a range of appropriate housing types and sizes.
- Support local business nodes throughout the Township, as well as downtown and the Valley addressed below.
- Promote breweries, distilleries, wineries in appropriate locations, as discussed in the Land Use Plan Element update.

Downtown/Main Street

Overall

- Focus on streetscape improvements:
 - Start in core areas, such as by Town Hall and Washington Street, then extend elsewhere.
 - Need more consistency in streetscape design.
- Improve parking:
 - Undertake an inventory of existing spaces.
 - Provide more, bigger and more visible parking signage, as well as and striping.
 - Create turnover of parking spaces (e.g. cannot have all day parking where businesses need spaces for customers).
 - Consider whether parking meters will improve or worsen situation (e.g. will increased revenue potential outweigh discouraging shoppers and other visitors?).
- Complete the Main Street “road diet” – would help with pedestrian safety and organizing parking.
- Consider providing additional mid-block crosswalks on Main Street, although this may be an issue where street is four lanes wide.
- Push for improved jitney and bus service.
- Improve appearance of bus stops.
- Site of CVS on Main Street an opportunity.
- Need more staffing for downtown issues and planning – Township seeking to hire an economic development specialist/planner.

Edison Area

- Capitalize on Thomas Edison National Historical Park:

- Encourage uses and development that support the Park as well as benefit from its presence on Main Street.
- Consider adding historical plaques along Main Street and other locations, potentially creating a path similar to Boston's Freedom Trail.
- Other streetscape improvements could include a wayfinding kiosk, as well as street trees, new sidewalks and curbs, etc.
- Promote permanent pedestrian safety improvements and provide additional bicycle parking and facilities at the Park and in the vicinity.
- There is former worker housing in the vicinity of the former factory which could be restored to its historical state. It could be utilized as part of the Park, or for office or residential uses.

Valley/Highland Avenue Station Area

- Support arts entities, as well as existing businesses and residential uses.
- Promote additional residential uses, including transit-oriented development with higher densities closer to Highland Avenue Station.
- Improve the parking situation.

III. Historic Preservation

A. Introduction

West Orange is home to a number of historic buildings and properties, with a rich heritage including historical figures and notable events. The Township's history is preserved through local landmarks and documented in the local history collection housed in the West Orange Public Library. The West Orange Historic Preservation Commission plays a key role in these efforts through actions such as reviewing applications for development impacting historic landmarks and updating the Township's survey of historic resources, through funding provided by the State. However, budget and staffing reductions at the State Historic Preservation Office have made it more difficult for West Orange and other municipalities to receive support.

Yet, the Historic Preservation Commission has been able to continue its work, notably advising property owners and development applicants. It can serve as a resource for owners of historic and other older buildings undertaking restoration projects. The survey of historic resources has been added to development application checklist.

B. Recommendations

- The Historic Preservation Commission should be better promoted within the Township.
- Consider designating additional local landmarks.
- Continue updating the survey of historic resources, as it needs to be updated regularly for West Orange to remain a Certified Local Government, which impacts eligibility for funding from the State.
- Emphasize the sustainability and community character benefits of reuse of historic and other older buildings.

IV. Community Facilities, Utilities and Recycling

A. Introduction

This plan element update addresses existing and potential future needs for community facilities in West Orange. Its focus is on changes that have occurred since the 2010 Reexamination was prepared with regard to the Township’s public schools; emergency services; public library; health department; water, sewer and other utilities; and municipal facilities and properties. It also includes information regarding recycling in West Orange. It recognizes there are municipal budget limitations, which require creative thinking about how to fund improvements. Among the broader issues that should be considered in decision making for community facilities investments are environmental sustainability, economic impacts and serving a broad population, in terms of background, age and income levels.

Map 4 at the end of this chapter shows the locations of existing community facilities in West Orange.

B. Existing Conditions, Issues and Recommendations

Public Schools

The 2010 Master Plan Update raised a number of issues with regard to the West Orange Public Schools. One of the district’s most pressing facilities needs was for additional classroom space, as 14 trailers were being utilized throughout the district at that time to serve overflow enrollment. Trailers have been eliminated at most of the schools. It was noted in the 2010 Update that the school district was in the process of selecting a site for a new elementary school, but this has not been completed.

Currently, the school district is considering options for reconfiguring and rezoning schools. It is also looking to add pre-kindergarten. However, it is uncertain what the impacts on the West Orange Public Schools will be of the Edison Village redevelopment and other new residential uses. There have been improvements to schools in recent years; for example, bus driveway at Gregory Elementary. But there have been issues, such as with indoor air quality in school buildings.



Rock Spring golf course could be a potential location for a new school, although there are competing demands for this site as discussed in the Land Use Element update.

Police

The West Orange Police Department’s headquarters are located at 60 Main Street, adjacent to the Municipal Building, and it has substations in other locations in the Township. The Police Department is involved in traditional crime fighting and prevention, as well as community outreach and pedestrian safety efforts. Along with Fire Department, it has representatives who assist with the review of major development applications.

Fire

The West Orange Fire Department has four fire stations, each located near a corner of the Township – which means none is central to the quadrant in which it is located. A fifth facility has been added since 2010, at the former First Aid Squad building on Mount Pleasant Place, consistent with a recommendation in the 2010 Master Plan Update. Station 5 is centrally located and also contains the Township’s Office of Emergency Management and Fire Department ambulances. However, the building is not compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and has outdated facilities. For example, it would be an appropriate location for a ladder truck to allow for more centralized response, but a new facility would need to be constructed to fit it. A central fire headquarters at this location (or potentially the Essex Green/Executive Drive redevelopment area) could be considered.



Since 2010, Fire Department has lost one engine company. According to Fire Department representatives, all fire stations need new roofs and are in “dire need of improvements.” Yet, the Fire Department’s ISO (Insurance Services Office) rating was recently upgraded from 4 to 3, which means insurance savings for the Township and its residents. (The ISO rating scale is from 1 to 10, with lower numbers being better.) The impacts of development on fire and other emergency services need to be considered.

A suggestion made by Department representatives included in the 2010 Master Plan Update was to construct a fire training facility in West Orange, which could result in cost and time savings for the Township, as well as produce income. This remains a valid recommendation.

A large number of its fire and medical responses in West Orange are due to Interstate Route 280, as the Department responds to accidents on this heavily traveled highway that bisects the Township.

A large number of its fire and medical responses in West Orange are due to Interstate Route 280, as the Department responds to accidents on this heavily traveled highway that bisects the Township.

Library

The West Orange Public Library is located at 46 Mount Pleasant Avenue, adjacent to the Municipal Building. The Library is open seven days a week for 60 hours per week, except from the end of May to the middle of September when it is closed on Sundays. As of the 2010 Master Plan Update, the library was open 65 hours per week except in July and August.

The library building was constructed in 1959, and an addition was constructed to it in 1978. An improvement study was prepared for the library in 2015. This study identified a significant number of deficiencies with the existing facilities. In 2019, the property containing the library building and upper parking area, as well as a portion of the municipal property containing parking for the library, Town Hall and Police Headquarters was designated as an “Area in Need of Redevelopment.”

A strategic plan for the library was also completed in 2016.

The library’s mission according to the strategic plan is as follows:

The West Orange Public Library provides a stimulating and supportive environment for lifelong learning, literacy and the enjoyment of reading through free and open access to relevant collections and engaging programs.

Its vision is as follows:

The West Orange Public Library is a welcoming and lively center for lifelong learning and literacy, personal enrichment, and community interaction as well as a major contributor to the prosperity and growth of our town. The dedicated and knowledgeable staff serves all patrons, promotes the love of reading and self-expression, and through a dynamic global network.

According to library representatives, it is important for quality of life. It is the only all-ages educational facility in the Township. Among the services provided by the Library are English classes, early childhood literacy, job search assistance and programming space. Coordination with other entities is important given budget limitations – there is no need to duplicate services. As technology changes, the demand for services evolves as well which impacts facility and programming needs. It is also noted there is demand for community meeting space.

There is currently the possibility of relocating the library to a new facility within West Orange. The Library has different usage patterns for different populations within the Township. It should be considered whether a change in the location of the facility would impact the availability of services.

Recycling

Recycling is mandated by State law and municipal ordinance in West Orange. The Township offers residential curbside recycling on a weekly basis. Since 2013, recyclables have been collected in a single stream method (i.e. there is no need to separate various recyclable materials for pickup). Another option is to bring recyclable items to the West Orange Environmental Center, which is located at 590 Mt. Pleasant Avenue. The Environmental Center provides other services including recycling of electronics, batteries, light bulbs and scrap metal.

Utilities

Water service in West Orange is provided by New Jersey American Water Company. Issues with water service in the Valley area were cited in stakeholder interviews. It was also suggested that the water company better coordinate its service with the Township in light of new development and redevelopment.

The Township of West Orange maintains over 200 miles of storm sewers and sanitary sewers and over 2,000 inlets and manholes. There are issues with the age and type of sewers in certain locations within the Township, particularly in the eastern side of town. The New Jersey Department of Transportation recently released Complete & Green Streets for All, which is a model complete streets policy and guide, which provides useful information and examples for municipalities. In particular, West Orange should incorporate sustainable design solutions for stormwater management.

Transmission and distribution of electricity and natural gas in West Orange is handled by Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSE&G). Customers can choose PSE&G or a different supplier for gas and electric service.

The communications landscape has continued to evolved since 2010. Verizon and Xfinity (Comcast) provide telephone, internet and television services in West Orange. Other options include satellite television and wireless providers.

Other Municipal Properties and Services

In 2019, the Township purchased the former Rock Spring Club. This 138-acre property was an independent club that merged with Montclair Golf Club, also located in West Orange, in 2016. The property is currently continuing to operate as a golf course, which is now open to the public. However, given the site's large size and convenient location, there is the potential to utilize portions of the property for uses other than recreation and open space.

The Township's Department of Public Works facility on Lakeside Avenue will need to be relocated as part of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan implementation. Multiple locations are being considered to determine the most suitable location, or potentially multiple locations for different functions.

The potential reconfiguration of the Municipal Complex parking lot was recommended in the 2010 Update. This lot serves the uses surrounding it, which are the Municipal Building, Police Department headquarters, the Public Library and a senior housing building, and is heavily utilized. With the potential conversion of the Library to a senior housing development, consideration should be given to reconfiguration of this lot. The conversion to a parking deck suggested in the 2010 Update remains cost-prohibitive. However, redesign of the lot could be an option, such as with a portion becoming a plaza that could be used for parking during the week and available for special events on weekends.



The recommendation from the 2010 Master Plan Update for West Orange to continue to promote shared services between the Township and other governmental entities remains valid. In particular, there may be opportunities for combined school district/Township facilities and services, as well as continued sharing of services between these entities.

Key to Map 4: Community Facilities

Map No.	Name	Address
Schools		
1	Gregory Elementary School	301 Gregory Avenue
2	Hazel Elementary School	45 Hazel Avenue
3	Kelly Elementary School	555 Pleasant Valley Way
4	Mount Pleasant Elementary School	9 Manger Road
5	Redwood Elementary School	75 Redwood Avenue
6	St. Cloud Elementary	71 Sheridan Avenue
7	Washington Elementary School	289 Main Street
8	Golda Och Academy, Wilf Lower School	122 Gregory Avenue
9	Liberty Middle School	1 Kelly Drive
10	Roosevelt Middle School	36 Gilbert Place
11	Thomas A. Edison Central Six School	75 William Street
12	West Orange High School	51 Conforti Avenue
13	Seton Hall Prep	120 Northfield Avenue and Prospect Avenue
14	Golda Och Academy, Eric F. Ross Upper School	1418 Pleasant Valley Way
15	Mount Carmel Guild Academy	100 Valley Way
16	West Orange Board of Education	179 Eagle Rock Avenue
Municipal Use		
1	Township City Hall	66 Main Street
	Police Department & Municipal Court	60 Main Street
2	West Orange Public Library	46 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
3	P/O Timothy C. Groves Police Sub Station / Community Center	92 Washington Street
4	West Orange Environmental Center	590 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Performing Arts		
1	Gaelen Center for the Arts	760 Northfield Avenue
2	Oskar Schindler Performing Arts Center	Boland Drive
3	Luna Stage Co.	555 Valley Road
Community Center/Housing		
1	JCC MetroWest	760 Northfield Avenue
2	John P. Renna Jr. House (senior)	10 Gaston Street
3	Community House	242 Main Street
4	Elks Lodge	424 Main Street
5	James A. Degnan House / Eagle Rock Senior Citizens Housing	430 Main Street
Fire Station		
1	West Orange Fire Department #1, Headquarters Company	415 Valley Road
2	#2, Tory Corner	84 Washington Street
3	#3, Saint Cloud	93 Ridgeway Avenue
4	#4, Pleasantdale	280 Pleasant Valley Way
5	#5, Englishtown	25 Mt. Pleasant Place

**2019 Master Plan Update
Township of West Orange**

Hospital		
1	St. Barnabas Medical Center (in Livingston)	94 Old Short Hills Road, Livingston
Train Station		
	Highland Avenue Train Station (in Orange)	
	Mountain Train Station (in South Orange)	
	Orange Train Station (in Orange)	
Public Park		
1	South Mountain Reservation / Codey Arena / Turtle Back Zoo	County
2	Rock Spring Golf Club	Township
3	Ridgeway Park	Township
4	Frances A. Byrne Golf Course	County
5	Stagg Field	Board of Education
6	Boland Park	Township
7	O'Connor Park	Township
8	The Rock	Township
9	Degnan Park/Vincent Lake	Township
10	Eagle Rock Reservation	County
11	Crystal Lake	Township
12	Green Acres	Township
13	Glenmont	Federal
14	Ginny Duenkel Pool	Township
15	Colgate Park	Township
16	Byrne Park	Township
17	Thomas Edison National Historic Park	Federal
18	New Jersey National Guard Armory	State
19	Lafayette Park	Township



- Legend**
- NJ Transit Train Stations
 - NJ Transit Rail Lines
 - Community Facilities
 - Open Space
 - Park and Ride Lot
 - Elementary School
 - Middle School
 - High School
 - Public Park
 - Fire Station
 - Municipal Building
 - Performing Arts
 - Community Center/Housing
 - Hospital

V. Circulation

A. Introduction

This plan element update addresses improvements to roads and other transportation infrastructure and accounts for new development that impacts these facilities. The Township has been active in providing for a more balanced circulation network in recent years, including greater emphasis placed on pedestrian circulation and advancement of “complete streets” planning and implementation in conjunction with the Township’s Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board. West Orange is also well-served by public transportation, particularly buses and commuter shuttles within its borders and multiple train stations located in adjoining municipalities. This plan element also recognizes there are sections of West Orange that are accessible primarily by automobile, given the Township’s size and topography, and that the presence of Interstate Route 280, New Jersey Route 10 and a number of Essex County roads are important to many residents and businesses. Parking is also discussed in this plan element.

A number of issues relevant to senior citizens and other older adult residents were identified by a recent Survey of Older Adults in West Orange, which are being furthered through the Township’s Senior Livability Initiative. The transportation needs cited by the Survey of Older Adults include safety concerns such as quality of sidewalks and crossings at intersections, a lack of walkable destinations, a lack of parking in downtown West Orange and a lack of knowledge of schedules for local public transportation. Recommendations related to these issues are included in the following section.

Included at the end of this chapter are excerpts from the Complete Streets Concept Plan prepared by Rutgers University students in 2015 showing issues and potential solutions for making streets safer in the Township. Map 5 shows transportation resources in West Orange.

B. Existing Conditions, Issues and Recommendations

Pedestrian/Bicycle

There has been an increased focus on pedestrian safety and provision of bicycle facilities in West Orange in recent years. The Township adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2013, which was formally incorporated into the Circulation Plan Element of the West Orange Master Plan in 2016. Another notable action was the creation of a Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board in 2015. Since its founding, the Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board has helped achieve the following:

- Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (with Partners for Health Foundation)
- Complete Streets Concept Plan (with Rutgers University)
- Traffic light on Pleasant Valley Way at Alisa Drive
- Proposed Main Street “road diet”
- Lengthening school zone on Pleasant Valley Way
- Adding school zone on Route 10 for Liberty Middle School
- Assisting with walkability/bike ability audits at elementary schools

There has also been growing emphasis on Complete Streets in New Jersey. The New Jersey Department of Transportation recently released Complete & Green Streets for All, which is a model complete streets policy and guide, which provides useful information and examples for municipalities.

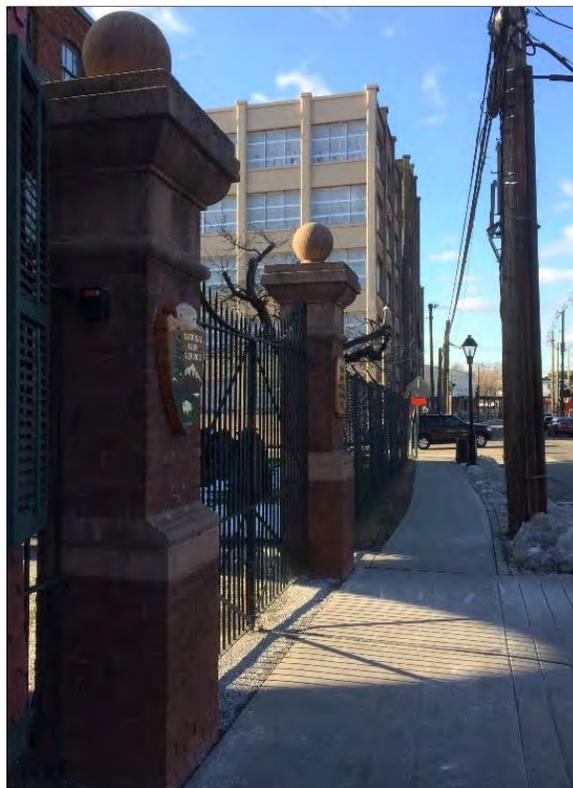
Below are potential recommendations related to walking and bicycling in West Orange.

General

- Create a Complete Streets checklist for development applications to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment.
- Enact a Complete Streets ordinance, which incorporates green design features.
- Consider strengthening the role of the Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board, such as requiring development applications be referred to the Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board.
- Improve connectivity within the Township, such as between residential and commercial areas, as well as to schools, parks, community facilities and other trip generators.
- Incorporate green streets and infrastructure, in furtherance of New Jersey's updated stormwater management rules.

Sidewalks and Trails

- Create sidewalk mapping to identify missing links and assess the condition of existing sidewalks.
- Sidewalks should be required in conjunction with new developments, even if there are no existing sidewalks, but need context for where to be provided – e.g. focus on main roads and trip generators, no need for “sidewalks to nowhere.”
- Consider creation of a pedestrian safety fund in lieu of constructing sidewalks along frontage in such situations.
- Explore options and implement additional safety measures for crossing at intersections, such as repainting lines and increasing crossing times.
- Focus on pedestrian safety on Main Street, such as through “road diet” (e.g. narrowing traveled way for vehicles) near Edison National Historical Park and potentially adding mid-block crosswalks in appropriate locations.
- Improvements also needed at and near Pleasant Valley Way/Northfield Avenue intersection.
- Provide pedestrian level lighting in busy areas where needed.
- Work with Essex County to address following:
 - Extend sidewalks on Northfield Avenue to the west from Pleasant Valley Way - if not feasible, consider opportunity to connect within South Mountain Reservation.
 - Make Northfield Avenue in the Saint Cloud commercial area more pedestrian friendly, and make it easier to cross the street from the residences and businesses on the north side of the street to the County's various facilities.
 - Explore providing a path parallel to Cherry Lane, to link up with Millburn and Maplewood, particularly when lower portion of Cherry Lane closed on Sundays.
- Provide pedestrian improvements in the Essex Green/Executive Drive area and better connect it with nearby neighborhoods, which potentially could include:



- A traffic signal at Marion Drive and Rooney Circle.
- Sidewalks along all streets.
- Off-street pedestrian paths.
- Push for improved Route 280 crossings, with bicycle and pedestrian facilities. There are only two existing streets that allow motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists to cross Route 280 to the west of the First Watchung Ridge: Prospect Avenue and Pleasant Valley Way. Both of these are heavily traveled County roads, and interchange ramps are among the obstacles to walking and bicycling to get across Route 280. Consideration should be given to providing an alternate means of traversing the highway bisecting West Orange. A possible location would be between the Prospect Avenue and Pleasant Valley Way interchanges, which could also connect to the pending redevelopment of the Essex Green/Executive Drive area.



- Coordinate with the Township’s Open Space and Recreation Plan to create a West Orange trail network – include Essex County trails, the Lenape Trail (an urban/suburban trail network connecting 18 parks and 11 municipalities in Essex County that runs the length of West Orange), Township parks and school properties.

Bicycling

- Recommendation from 2010 Master Plan Update remains valid: Improved bicycle storage should be provided at key locations including public buildings, shopping centers, large office buildings and transit stations. While simple bicycle racks would be a good start, covered and secured areas and individual bicycle lockers would be better. Consideration should be given to requiring bicycle storage facilities in new development over certain size thresholds.

Transit/Alternative Modes

Transit service in West Orange includes local and long-distance buses and commuter shuttle routes to nearby New Jersey Transit railroad stations. Highland Avenue station in Orange and Mountain Station in South Orange are within walking distance of some West Orange residents. There are now six commuter shuttle routes that provide connections to nearby railroad stations from residential areas as well as parking lots, an increase from four routes that existed in 2010. These services are enhanced by a real-time jitney tracking app and text alerts. Below are potential recommendations related to public and alternative transportation in West Orange.

- The 2010 Update recommended better coordination between the Township’s senior shuttle program and the commuter shuttle routes in order to improve mobility for all Township residents throughout the day, to provide transportation to downtown, the Public Library and other attractions. This recommendation remains valid.
- The 2004 and 2010 Reexamination Reports requested that bus service be improved and expanded to serve several major employment centers that are not currently located on bus routes (e.g., the Organon site, Daughters of Israel Geriatrics Home, Kessler Institute) and that

bus service be provided on Valley Road to better serve residents and businesses in the area. These recommendations remain valid.

- Improve the appearance of bus stops.
- Consider whether electric scooters, bicycle sharing or similar programs would be viable in built-up portions of the Township.
- Expand methods of distribution of schedules for public transportation services, such as the jitney and senior shuttles.



Streets and Traffic

The 2010 Master Plan Update discussed traffic safety issues at some major intersections throughout the Township, but noted that nearly all of major thoroughfares in West Orange are Essex County or State roads. This issue remains valid.

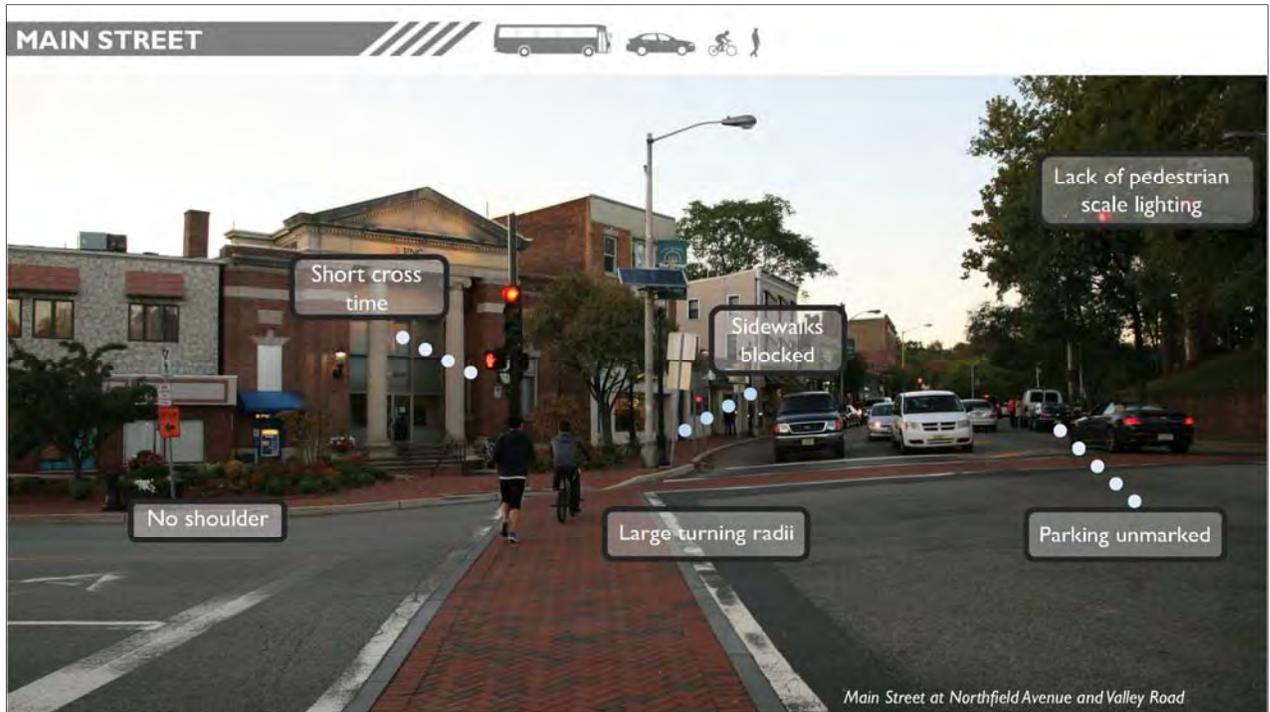
Other issues discussed in the 2010 Master Plan Update remain valid. Connectivity should continue to be promoted throughout the Township, particularly in new developments. Converting some side streets from two-way to one-way traffic could be considered in some locations in downtown and the Valley. The impacts of traffic from new development on emergency services should be considered.

Parking

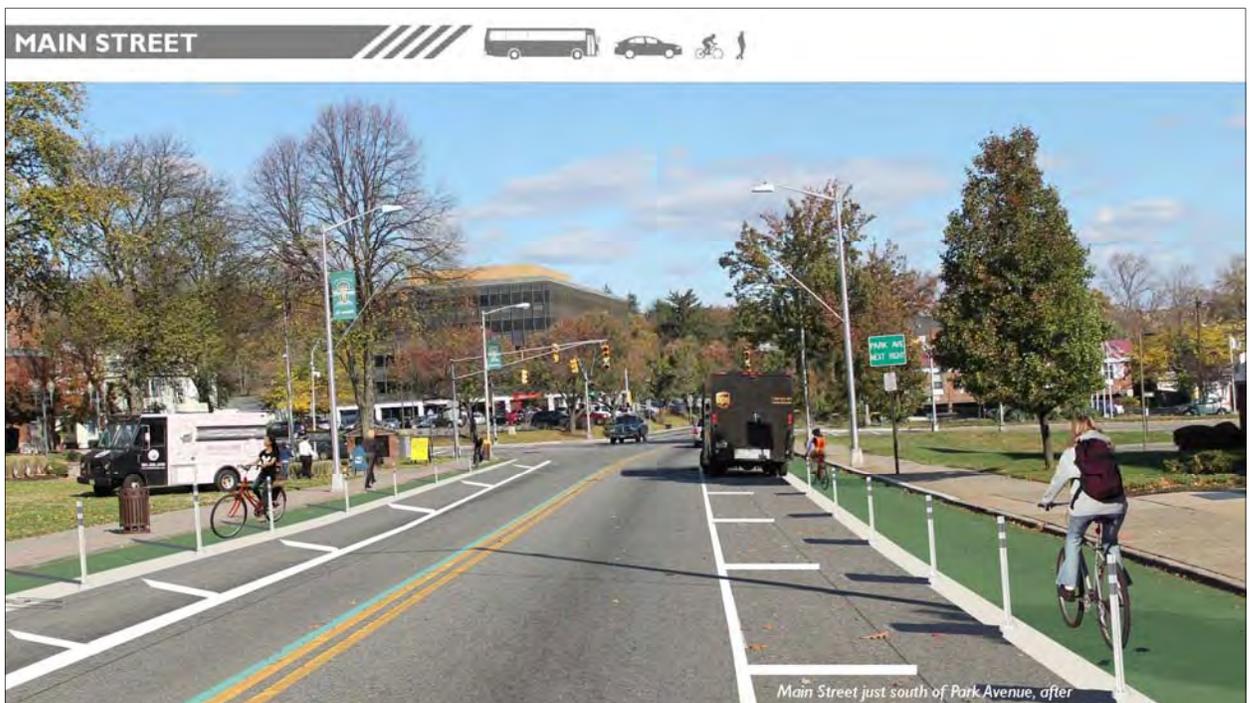
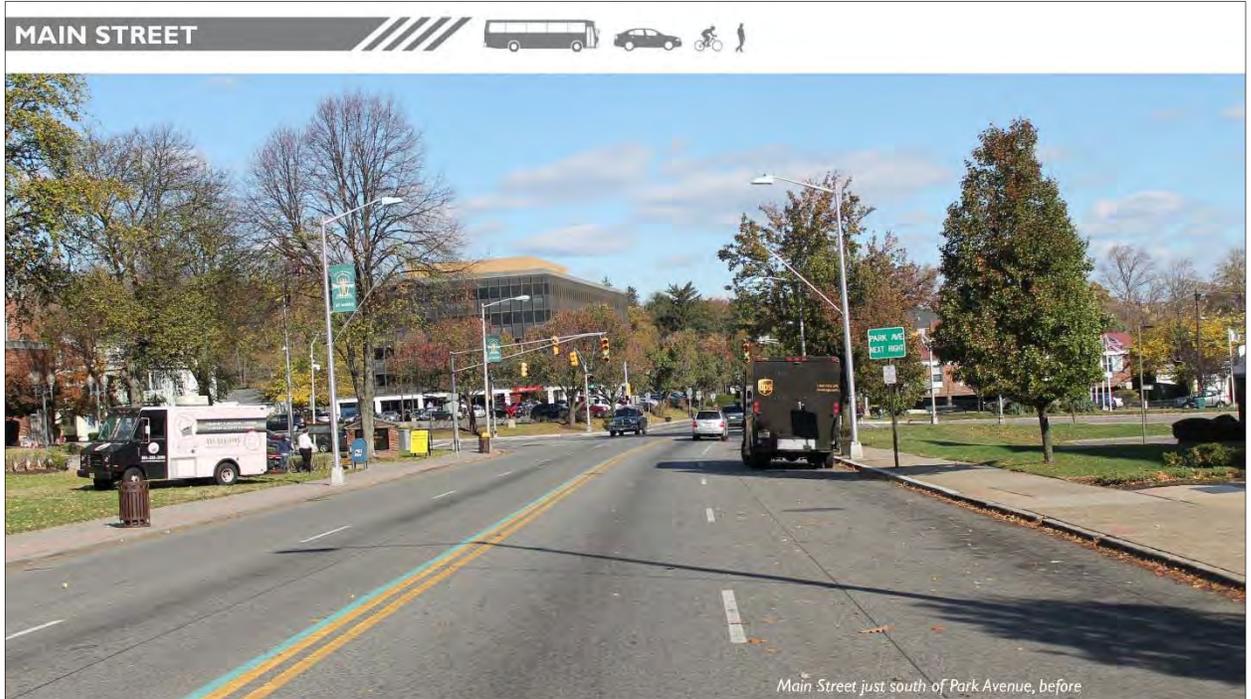
Parking remains an issue throughout the entire downtown area, including both Main Street and the Valley. Measures to address parking concerns could include the following:

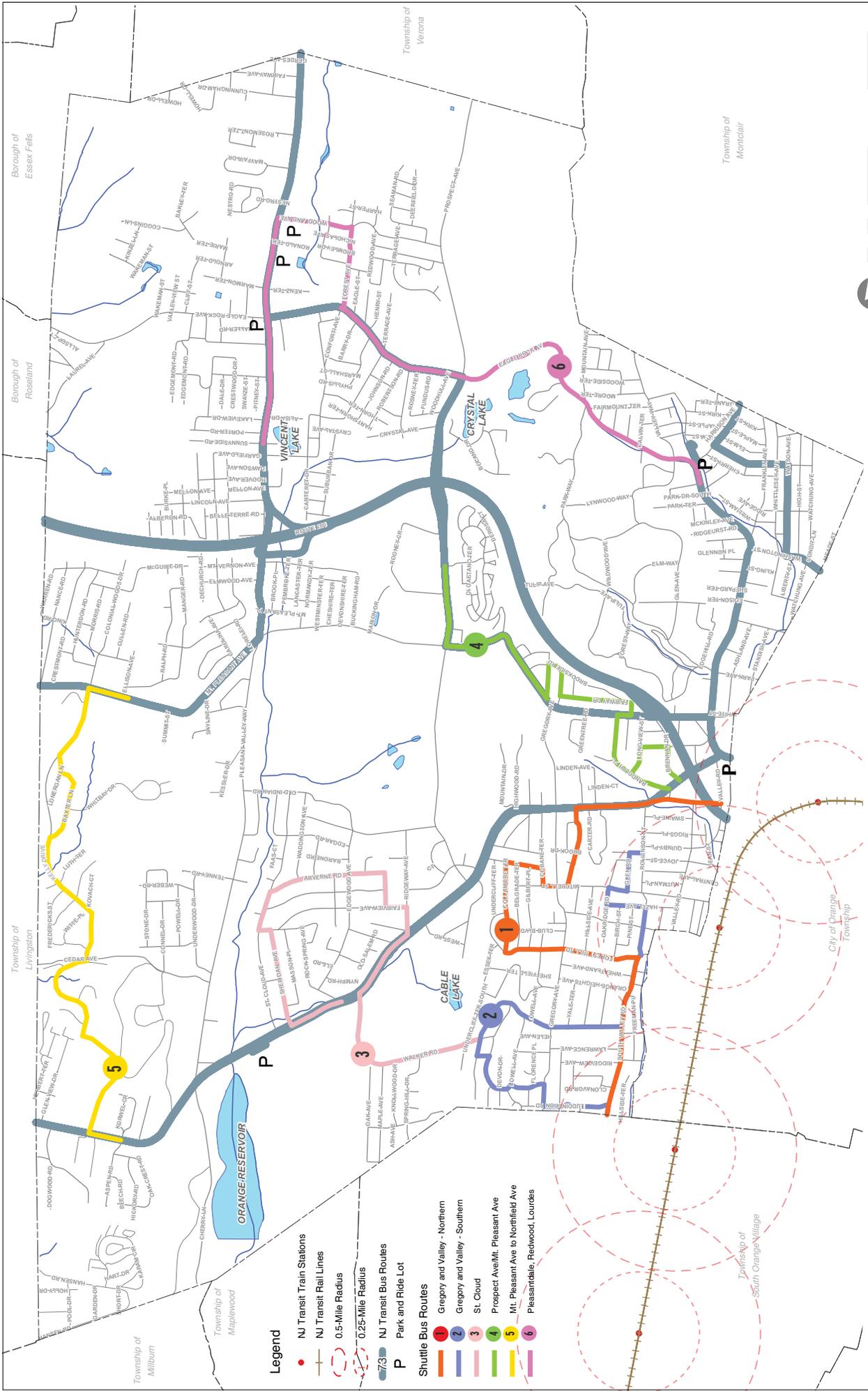
- Provide additional, larger and more visible parking signage.
- Create turnover of parking spaces to ensure that parking is available for customers of downtown businesses.
- Consider creation of additional public parking lots in downtown and other business districts.
- Encourage or mandate the provision of electric vehicle charging stations.
- Improve traffic safety within shopping center and other commercial parking lots as properties are updated or redeveloped.

Below are excerpts from the Complete Streets Concept Plan prepared by students at Rutgers University in 2015. This document outlines a number of issues related to pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle safety in West Orange, and illustrates potential solutions for making streets safer in the Township. The following images show existing and potential conditions on Main Street in the vicinity of Park Avenue, as an example how changes such as decreasing the width of travel lanes, adding bicycle lanes, planting street trees and providing pedestrian-scaled lighting can improve the pedestrian experience as well as enhance safety for all road users.









Legend

- NJ Transit Train Stations
- NJ Transit Rail Lines
- 0.5-Mile Radius
- 0.25-Mile Radius
- 73 NJ Transit Bus Routes
- P Park and Ride Lot

Shuttle Bus Routes

- 1 Gregory and Valley - Northern
- 2 Gregory and Valley - Southern
- 3 St. Cloud
- 4 Prospect Ave/Mt. Pleasant Ave
- 5 Mt. Pleasant Ave to Northfield Ave
- 6 Pleasantside, Redwood, Lourdes



SOURCES: NJDOT-OGIS



VI. Housing

The Township’s full Housing Element and Fair Share Plan is being prepared by others. West Orange has continued to be proactive in addressing its affordable housing obligations. As discussed in the reexamination, there has been continued uncertainty in affordable housing compliance. The Township received Third Round Substantive Certification from the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) in 2009, but along with other certified municipalities it has had to update its plan for approval by the Superior Court, as COAH has been inactive.

In terms of general housing objectives, West Orange remains committed to addressing its “fair share” of regional affordable housing needs, as well as providing a range of housing opportunities. These include specialized housing for senior citizens and residents with special needs (e.g. group homes for the developmentally disabled), assisted living and nursing facilities and a range of for-sale and rental housing, including single-family, two-family and multifamily dwellings. Minimum lot areas for single-family zones range from 6,000 square feet in the R-6 district to 80,000 square feet in the R-1 district.



VII. Open Space and Recreation

The Township's Open Space and Recreation Commission and its consultant have adopted an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan Element, which is dated November 29, 2019. The full Open Space and Recreation Plan is hereby incorporated into the Master Plan.



Some notable changes, issues and opportunities related to open space and recreation include the following:



- The Township has made some land purchases for open space in recent years, most notably its 2019 acquisition of the former Rock Spring Club from Montclair Golf Club.
- Crystal Lake remains an opportunity, as are Vincent's Pond/Degnan Park.
- Since 2010, the makeup of the Open Space and Recreational Commission has changed and has been increased from seven to nine members.
- Essex County has substantial open space in West Orange. The County and Township need to continue to work together regarding the future use of these lands.

In particular, the balance of preservation and recreation in South Mountain Reservation is a concern. Essex County has made the Turtle Back Zoo and surrounding attractions into a major attraction, which is a resource for Township residents and visitors and an economic development engine for West Orange. However, there are concerns about the amount of development in the Reservation, and the transformation of formerly open areas into active recreation space and zoo facilities. The Township should continue to work with Essex County to allow for appropriate development without overwhelming what makes the South Mountain Reservation a special place.



VIII. Sustainability

A. Introduction

West Orange adopted its first Master Plan Sustainability Plan as part of the 2010 Master Plan Update. This document was at that time only recently enabled by a 2008 amendment to the Municipal Land Use Law that authorized the inclusion of a “green buildings and environmental sustainability plan element” in a municipal master plan (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28b(16)). The 2010 Sustainability Plan provided a central location for the Township’s many existing and planned sustainability efforts.

This current Sustainability Plan updates the 2010 document, and expands upon it to address additional topics. West Orange has been certified by Sustainable Jersey since 2016. Sustainable Jersey is a municipal certification and incentive program started in 2009 that includes required and elective actions that municipalities can implement to receive the certification. This plan element has been prepared in accordance with Sustainable Jersey’s requirements and recommendations. The Township remains committed to Sustainable Jersey certification as it continues and expands its sustainability efforts.

The 2010 Sustainability Element noted a commonly cited definition of “sustainable development” is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” As an essentially built-out community, sustainability has been integrated into development and planning in West Orange for some time. Sustainability as applied to West Orange means balancing preservation and enhancement of natural resources with promotion of appropriate future growth and the needed infrastructure for this growth.



This updated sustainability plan is intended to raise awareness of West Orange’s existing and future sustainability planning efforts and to highlight the Township’s commitment to supporting such goals and concepts. To this end, overall goals and guiding principles are provided, which provide the basis for numerous recommended actions. This Sustainability Plan addresses many of the topics included in other elements of the Township’s Master Plan in a comprehensive manner, particularly Land Use; Open Space and Recreation; Community Facilities; and Circulation. Updates to these other elements of the Master Plan have been written to be consistent with the goals and recommendations of the Sustainability Plan.

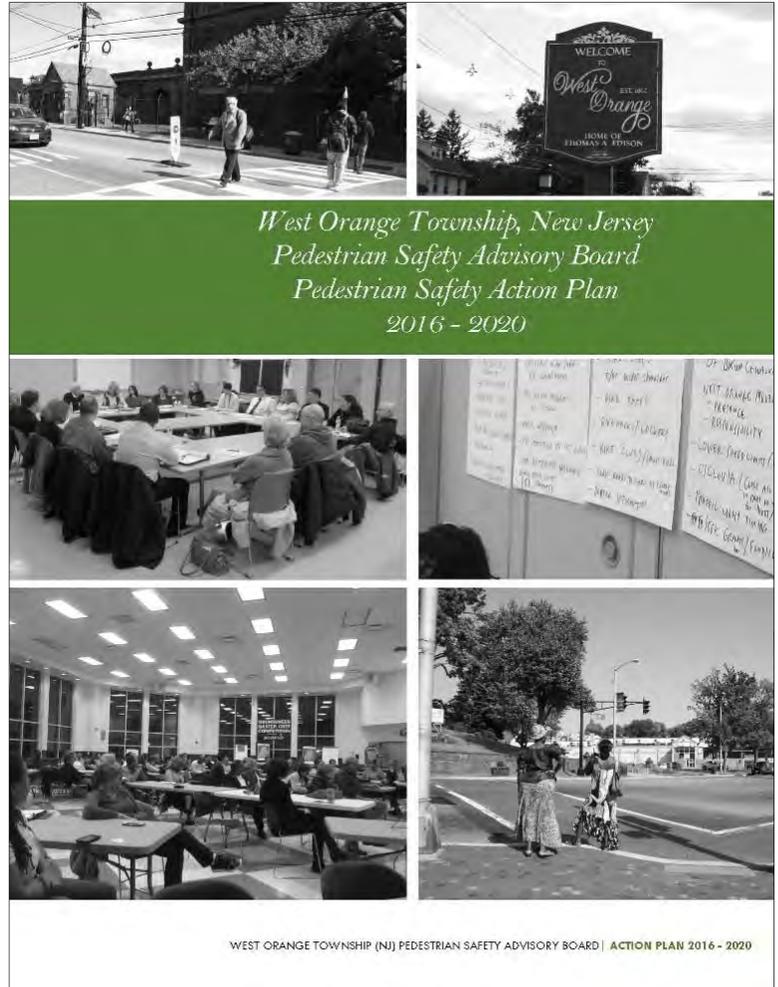
B. West Orange’s Sustainability Actions

The West Orange Environmental Commission was founded in 2007 as the Energy Commission, as it grew out of the Township’s “Energy Diet” program. The Environmental Commission, which serves as the West Orange Green Team, has sponsored special events and worked with Township’s schools and other entities to support their sustainability endeavors. Other actions taken by West Orange to make it a greener community include the following:

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- Creating a Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board, which has helped make the Township more walkable
- Expanding its commuter shuttle program
- Adopting a “complete streets” policy and incorporating it into the Township’s Master Plan
- Expanding recycling programs and transforming its recycling center into an environmental center, which plays an active educational role in the community
- Retrofitting public facilities
- Incorporating green purchasing measures
- Working with utility companies on efficiency and conservation efforts
- Adopting a tree protection ordinance and a natural features ordinance, which limits or prohibits development on steep slopes

The Township has also regularly updated its Master Plan and development regulations, as well as application procedures, to incorporate sustainability objectives and techniques into development planning, regulation and review. In October 2019 the Township Council adopted two resolutions pertaining to this topic. Resolution 242-19 is a land use pledge committing to “continuing good, planned and thoughtful land uses decisions” to make the Township more sustainable. The second, Resolution 246-19, sets forth steps with regard to municipal land use decisions “with the intent of making West Orange a truly sustainable community.” This resolution discusses the following topics: regional cooperation, transportation choices, natural resource protection, mix of land uses, housing options, green design and municipal facilities siting. Both resolutions were then provided to all members of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Environmental Commission, Open Space and Recreation Commission and Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board.



A number of documents relevant to sustainability planning have been prepared for the Township in recent years. These include the following:

- Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study (2013)
- Complete Streets Concept Plan (2015)
- Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (2015)
- Master Plan Circulation Element Amendment for Complete Streets (2016)

The Environmental Commission and other Township agencies have been successful at raising public awareness of conservation and other sustainability measures. These efforts should continue and be expanded. The Sustainability Plan itself should be a tool and a resource that is part of a broader offering of publications and events. There should also be overlap between this document and other documents and programs. It is also imperative that there is interaction between various Township departments and between the Township and other agencies, such as the West Orange Public Schools, Essex County, New Jersey Department of Transportation and utility companies.

C. Vision

The vision is for West Orange to be environmentally and economically sustainable, with a variety of transportation options, including complete streets, and a mix of land uses, housing types, community facilities, parks and open spaces accessible to all residents.

D. Goals and Objectives

The West Orange Master Plan includes a series of objectives, which are listed in the Reexamination Report. The Sustainability Plan Element incorporates and endorses these objectives and includes the following goals that are more specific to sustainability planning. These goals should provide general guidance for decision making regarding sustainability efforts in West Orange. They are as follows:

1. Improve the environment
2. Reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions
3. Promote healthy living habits
4. Encourage transportation choices
5. Support local employment, services and shopping
6. Improve overall quality of life

These remain valid, and are implemented through objectives and recommended actions in the following section.

E. Core Topics

The following sections are the mandatory core topics as required for Sustainable Jersey certification. Recommendations or action steps for how West Orange will address the issue are included in each section.

Climate Change/Green House Gas Emissions

There is growing recognition that climate change is a serious problem, and consensus in the scientific community that increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases (e.g. carbon dioxide, methane, ozone) in the atmosphere contribute to it. New Jersey has identified climate change as a public health risk and a threat to the public safety and welfare, as its residents will be negatively affected by extreme weather patterns, rising sea levels and rising temperatures. According to a [Washington Post](#) analysis of more than a century of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration temperature data, New Jersey's

average temperature has climbed by nearly two degrees Celsius since 1895. This is twice the average for the Lower 48 states. As noted in the Washington Post¹:

“The average New Jersey temperature from December through February now exceeds 0 degrees Celsius, the temperature at which water freezes. That threshold, reached over the past three decades, has meant lakes don't freeze as often, snow melts more quickly, and insects and pests don't die as they once did in the harsher cold.”

New Jersey has set targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions, as codified in the Global Warming Response Act of 2007. But it will take efforts by municipalities and their residents and businesses to effect change at the local level.

The Environmental Commission and other Township agencies have been successful at raising public awareness of conservation and other sustainability measures. These efforts should continue and be expanded. The Sustainability Plan itself should be a tool and a resource that is part of a broader offering of publications and events. There should also be overlap between this document and other documents and programs. It is also imperative that there is interaction between various Township departments and between the Township and other agencies, such as the West Orange Public Schools, Essex County, New Jersey Department of Transportation and utility companies.

The Township should also encourage the concepts of reduction and reuse at a larger scale. Actions consistent with these concepts include redevelopment of existing properties, repurposing of existing buildings, reduction in the size of houses and rethinking the amount of paved area that is truly necessary for parking areas and other improvements.

Recommended actions include the following:

- Reduce the use of fossil fuels.
- Implement energy efficiency measures.
- Increase use of renewable energy alternatives (purchase and production), such as solar, wind and geothermal.
- Adopt alternative energy ordinances that ensure that wind, solar, geothermal, and biofuel production is compatible with existing community land uses.
- Continue to coordinate land use and transportation planning to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- Provide electric vehicle charging stations in public parking lots and facilities, and encourage their provision in private developments.
- Identify opportunities to reduce energy consumption in municipal operational sectors, including buildings, vehicle fleets, outdoor lighting, and water and wastewater treatment facilities.
- Encourage energy conservation in all buildings through the adoption of behavioral policies.
- Coordinate reduction efforts with neighboring municipalities and counties.

¹ “2°C: Beyond the limit. Extreme climate change has arrived in America.” Steven Mufson, Chris Mooney, Juliet Eilperin and John Muyskens. Washington Post, August 13, 2019.

Renewable Energy

The Municipal Land Use Law definition of an “inherently beneficial use,” which is “a use which is universally considered of value to the community because it fundamentally serves the public good and promotes the general welfare,” includes wind, solar and photovoltaic energy facilities or structures. There have also been amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law in recent years to limit restrictions on the development of renewable energy facilities. Other forms of renewable energy include geothermal and biomass production. West Orange can promote the use of renewable energy by retrofitting existing structures and incorporating renewable energy sources in new developments.

Recommended actions include the following:

- Assess existing zoning regulations and amend them in order to reduce barriers for the development of wind and solar energy systems in appropriate locations.
- Adopt solar and wind ordinances that facilitate the permitting of small wind and solar energy installations.
- Pursue renewable energy demonstration projects on public facilities.
- Investigate the feasibility of geothermal and biomass production as a source of renewable energy.

Green Building and Design

Green design of new buildings is important, but there are many more existing buildings that could be made more energy efficient. There are also opportunities to add renewable energy sources on private property, as well as public lands. Therefore, encouraging — and in some cases mandating — action by private property owners will be necessary to effect larger scale improvements in the Township. The municipality can lead by example, but must also enable and promote improved site and building design for new development and redevelopment. The Township already has adopted a green design checklist as part of its development application review procedures.

Additional steps can be taken to improve the environmental and energy performance of buildings and reduce the impact of buildings on the surrounding environment. Such strategies include energy efficiency, water conservation, indoor environmental quality, increased recycling, use of recycled renewable materials, construction waste reduction, reduced auto use, tree preservation, native plants and avoidance of environmentally-sensitive landscape features. These techniques can yield significant long-term cost savings with lower energy and water consumption, generally with minimal added expense.

Recommended actions include the following:

- Provide incentives in land-use ordinances for buildings that utilize green design techniques.
- Lead by example by including green building design techniques in municipal buildings and upgrades.
- Require green parking lot design, particularly for larger parking facilities.

Land Use and Mobility

Changing land use patterns involves a comprehensive, longer-term planning effort that is clearly part of the scope of the overall Master Plan Update, and should be integrated into other plan elements beyond

the Sustainability Plan. For example, development recommendations should also be included in the Land Use Plan Element in order to be properly implemented through amendments to zoning regulations. There are currently a number of areas with compact, walkable development patterns in the Township. While not every area or new development will — or should — be high-density or mixed-use, certain concepts can be incorporated in new projects. These include pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly design, enhanced street connectivity and setting aside of open space. Cooperative efforts will be necessary with large non-municipal property owners — Essex County, golf courses and shopping centers, for example — as well as with owners of smaller-scale properties.



Transportation patterns and vehicle usage can have substantial impacts on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, such as through improvements to vehicle efficiency as well as reduced driving. The Township is leading by example in this regard, such as through introducing more fuel-efficient and/or alternative fuel vehicles to its fleet. Promotion of walking, bicycling and transit usage will help improve air quality, while spurring economic development. West Orange does not have any railroad stations within its borders. However, the Township has expanded its commuter shuttle service that connects residents of many of West Orange’s neighborhoods to nearby New Jersey Transit railroad stations, and some of these stations are accessible to West Orange residents by bicycle or on foot. The Township is also very well served by commuter buses.

Recommended actions include the following:

- Promote development in locations near transit and services. Particular areas of emphasis include the vicinity of the Highland Avenue New Jersey Transit railroad station and other areas of downtown, as well as near bus stops.
- Permit mixed-use development in such locations.
- The Township provides commuter shuttles to allow residents to access rail service.
- Increase focus on walkability and complete streets throughout the Township.
- Protect environmentally sensitive features and areas through development regulations.
- Continue efforts to make walking and bicycling easier.
- Implementing the Township’s existing Complete Streets policy by adopting a complete streets development checklist and/or ordinance to ensure that roads are designed for all users, not just automobiles, and connect to local destinations.
- Incorporate sustainability measures into Complete Streets requirements.
- Continue to plan for and preserve open spaces. As noted elsewhere in the Master Plan Update, West Orange has acquired a significant property (the 100+ acre former Rock Spring Club) as well as smaller properties in recent years for open space preservation.
- Consider revising parking standards to allow for more flexible parking provisions, such as shared parking, reserve parking and/or fee-in-lieu of parking.
- Encourage or require the provision of electric vehicle charging stations in larger new developments.

Water

There are a number of lakes, rivers and streams in West Orange. West Orange is part of two river basins: Rahway River/Woodbridge Creek and the Passaic River. Most of the Township east of the Second Watchung Ridge and south of Eagle Rock Avenue is in the Rahway River/Woodbridge Creek river basin, with both the East and West branches of the Rahway River originating in West Orange, while areas along the Township's western, northern and northeastern boundaries are in the Passaic River basin.

Continuing efforts need to be made to reduce or eliminate non-point-source pollution of waterbodies, such as runoff of oil and pesticides. Water conservation and reuse of wastewater can help reduce water demand. The municipality can lead by example, but private property owners need to participate as well. West Orange is committed to protecting water quality and quantity and supports innovative measures to do so.

Recommended actions include the following:

- Promote upgrades to the Township's water supply, particularly in older built up areas such as Main Street and the Valley.
- Support the reuse of rainwater and treated water in buildings, where applicable.
- Increase groundwater recharge through low-impact development strategies that reduce stormwater runoff, such as green roofs, green streets, rain gardens, bioswales and naturalized retention basins.
- Adopt a water conservation ordinance.
- Educate homeowners about reducing water use (i.e. water lawns at night or early in the morning, use rain barrels to collect water, insulate water pipes, etc.).
- Adopt Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices on municipal and publicly-owned properties.



END OF MASTER PLAN UPDATE