

**Prepared For:**

Borough of Roselle Park

Municipal Land Use Board

# 2016

## MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT BOROUGH OF ROSELLE PARK UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



**Prepared By:**

Neglia Engineering Associates

34 Park Avenue, Lyndhurst NJ 07071

# **Master Plan Reexamination Report**

**Borough of Roselle Park, Union County, NJ**

Prepared for:

Borough of Roselle Park Municipal Land Use Board

August 1, 2016

Prepared by

Neglia Engineering Associates

34 Park Avenue, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071

The original of this report was signed and sealed in accordance with Chapter 41 of Title 13 of the State Board of Professional Planners

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Anthony Kurus, P.E., P.P.

NJ Planning License No. 6145

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of a Master Plan Reexamination Report is to review and evaluate the local master plan and development regulations on a periodic basis in order to determine the need for updates and revisions. The Borough of Roselle Park adopted a new Master Plan in 1997, a Master Plan Reexamination Report in 2003 and a Master Plan Reexamination Report in 2009. The Borough has kept up to date with required planning initiatives, including the adoption of a Vision Plan (Roselle Park – New Directions) in January 2007, a new Housing and Fair Share Plan in 2009, an amended Romerovski Redevelopment Plan in February 2009, and the introduction of a West Westfield Avenue Redevelopment Plan I in May 2016.

The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that municipalities conduct a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations and that the review be conducted by the Planning Board. **As per the MLUL, a reexamination shall be completed at least once every 10 years from the previous reexamination.**

The Reexamination Report must include the following five key elements as per N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 :

- a) The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last Reexamination Report.
- b) The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date
- c) 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.
- d) The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
- e) 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.

The Master Plan Reexamination report has been prepared to meet the statutory requirements of the MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40-55D-89).

## **MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES FROM THE 2009 ROSELLE PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY HAVE INCREASED OR DECREASED**

As required by the MLUL, this Master Plan Reexamination Report includes an evaluation of the major problems and goals and objectives indicated in the 2009 Master Plan Reexamination Report. In addition, this section evaluates the extent to which these objectives and problems have increased or decreased.

### **Objectives**

The 2009 Master Plan Reexamination Report evaluated the twenty-two objectives relating to land use and development included in the 1997 Master Plan. These objectives are identified below and are followed by an analysis of the extent to which they have increased or decreased in ***bold, italic type***.

#### **Land Use – Residential**

1. Preserve and protect the integrity of Roselle Park's residential neighborhoods to maintain them as desirable improvements. ***This objective is still valid.***
2. Reduce housing turnover by encouraging home ownership opportunities and discouraging the creation of illegal rental apartments in existing homes. ***This objective is still valid. The Borough continues to institute an aggressive code enforcement program to address the problem of illegal rental apartments.***
3. Provide opportunities for the creation of senior citizen housing. ***The Borough previously identified a site to build a senior citizen housing project at the current Borough DPW yard. The Borough is currently in the process of bidding the construction of a new, relocated DPW site so that the current DPW site can be redeveloped for senior citizen housing. The Borough is currently working with Catholic Charities to build affordable senior citizen housing on current DPW site. This objective is still valid.***
4. Re-zone underutilized properties to capitalize on the Borough's existing resources, such as access to mass transit and highway accessibility. ***The Borough previously rezoned two parcels for new uses, including a Planned Development District and a Senior Housing District. The Borough previously adopted a redevelopment plan for the Romerovski Industrial Complex to build 249 rental units. The Borough is recently adopted a redevelopment plan entitled "West Westfield Avenue Redevelopment Plan I" which is centered on the site of the former Domanis Restaurant and Lounge. This objective is still valid.***

## Land Use – Commercial

1. Preserve the present business areas of the Borough, maintaining sufficient retail, service, and office facilities to meet the needs of Roselle Park’s residents. ***This objective is still valid.***
2. Enhance and support the Central Business District (CBD) by encouraging the redevelopment of underutilized properties adjacent to the CBD and providing additional areas for parking. ***This objective is still valid.***
3. Improve the appearance of the CBD through implementation of a streetscape improvement program, support for façade improvements and the adoption of design standards. ***This objective is still valid.***
4. Revise the zoning for commercial districts to differentiate between uses permitted in the CBD and uses permitted along arterial roadways. ***This objective is still valid.***

## Land Use – Industrial

1. Upgrade the older industrial areas of the Borough in order to maintain jobs and preserve the nonresidential tax base. ***The Borough’s manufacturing sector continues to decline due to the reliance on a more service-based economy. The Borough previously adopted a redevelopment plan the Romerovski site for the construction of 249 residential units including 37 affordable units. The Borough recently adopted a redevelopment plan for the West Westfield Avenue Redevelopment Plan I which is centered on the site of the former Domanis Restaurant and Lounge to create a new mixed use retail and residential development. This objective should be revised to a new objective to create jobs and attract viable businesses where growth is anticipated.***

## Community Design

1. Ensure that new development is visually and functionally compatible with the physical character and desired image of the Borough. ***Objective is still valid.***
2. Improve the visual and physical appearance of all nonresidential areas, while protecting residential neighborhoods from nonresidential encroachment. ***Objective is still valid.***
3. Ensure that all development is designed with respect to architectural heritage, including buildings, streetscape and landscape. ***Objective is still valid.***

## Circulation

1. Provide for safe and efficient movement of persons and goods throughout the Borough. ***This objective is still valid.***
2. Provide an ongoing maintenance program to prevent disrepair. ***Objective is still valid.***
3. *Rehabilitate the train station by coordinating with New Jersey Transit and seeking federal/state funding. This objective is still valid.*
4. Improve public transportation services by providing shelters for public bus stops in appropriate locations. ***The Municipal Land Use Board will continue to seek opportunities for new bus shelters with emphasis on incorporating appropriately designed bus shelters into redevelopment projects. This objective is still valid.***

## Community Facilities

1. Maintain a high level of municipal services to Roselle Park residents and nonresidential taxpayers. ***This objective is still valid.***
2. Provide community facilities that meet local needs and respond to the varying demands of different demographic groups. ***This objective is still valid.***
3. Maintain and improve the Borough resources rather than constructing or acquiring major new facilities. ***This objective is still valid.***

## Parks and Recreation

1. Provide additional space to support the increasing recreational demands of Borough resident. ***This objective is still valid.***
2. Provide pedestrian connections between existing and proposed recreational facilities, where possible. ***This objective is still valid and should also include provisions for bicycle traffic.***

## Compatibility of Planning Efforts

1. Cooperate with adjacent municipalities and the County in reviewing planning proposals that have regional influence or are located along Roselle Park's boundaries. ***Objective is still valid.***

## Major Problems

The major problems identified in the 2009 Master Plan Reexamination Report include the following:

## Neighborhood Preservation

Roselle Park is primarily residential. However, as is the case in any older developed community, problems exist at the edges of existing residential neighborhoods where houses abut



commercial and/or industrial uses. Increased buffer requirements and the use of transitional zones help minimize the impact of conflicting uses and protect the integrity of residential neighborhoods. In addition, the zoning map should be updated to recognize the existing nonresidential areas to minimize potential support for granting future variances at the edges of residential neighborhoods. ***The zoning ordinance and the zoning map has not been amended to specifically address these issues. As noted in the 2009 reexamination report, the Borough's commercial lots are relatively shallow with limited room available for landscape buffers. The zoning ordinance was updated to include additional regulations for screening and buffering of any parking area visible from the street.***

### **Housing Turnover**

Roselle Park has a relatively high number of rental housing units, with less than 60 percent of the Borough's housing units being owner-occupied. As a result, housing in Roselle Park has a fairly high turnover ratio. Future illegal conversions should be discouraged to reduce the number of rental units in the Borough. In addition, increased opportunities for homeownership should be encouraged. ***The Borough should continue to address this problem through aggressive code enforcement.***

### **Central Business District**

Roselle Park's Central Business District (CBD) is relatively small and does not provide much variety in stores. The main goal for the CBD is to enhance its image and function to attract new retail stores and customers. The Borough captures very little local consumption spending as approximately 50 percent of local consumer expenditures are made outside the borough. The CBD zone was expanded to include a portion of Westfield Avenue and the Borough created a Special Improvements District for the CBD and has been working with NJDOT with respect to a comprehensive streetscape improvements program for Westfield Avenue. ***The Borough is currently addressing and should continue to address this problem by encouraging redevelopment of existing commercial uses in the area.***

### **Senior Citizen Housing**

The number of senior citizens in the Borough is anticipated to start to increase. Associated with trend will be an increase in the demand for senior citizen housing. In order to provide opportunities for senior citizens to remain in the Borough after retirement, it is suggested that the Borough identify an appropriate location for construction of senior citizen housing. ***As stated within the "Objectives," the Borough previously identified a site to build a senior citizen housing project at the current Borough DPW yard. The Borough is currently in the process of bidding the construction of a new, relocated DPW site so that the current DPW site can be redeveloped for senior citizen housing. The Borough is currently working with Catholic Charities to build affordable senior citizen housing on current DPW site.***

## Recommendations

1. The Board recommends the following changes to the Development Regulations Land Use Chapter 128 of the Borough of Roselle Park Land Use Ordinance: 128-107.6.A.(1) from “maximum” lot area 80,000 sq. ft. should read “minimum” lot area 80,000 sq. ft. This change will serve to correct a typographical error present in the current edition of the Land Use Ordinance. ***This change has not been made to section 40-2703 A. 1. (previously 128-107.6 A. 1.) and is still valid.***
2. Due to the potential reactivation of the freight line along the Rahway Valley Rail Line and any possible future re-activation of the Central Jersey Line, considerations should be given to revising regulations with respect to, but not limited to environmental, economic, traffic, public safety and quality of life concerns. ***This objective is still valid.***
3. The Borough should consider reviewing and upgrading the permitted uses and bulk requirements in the industrial zoning districts. ***Upgrades to the permitted uses in the B-2 Central Business District and the B-3 Arterial District were made. This has not been completed for the industrial zoning districts and is still valid.***
4. The Borough should consider revising its development regulations to determine conformity with the Residential Uniform Site Improvement Standards Act. ***This change has not been made and is still valid.***

## SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

### 1. 2010 Census Data

Data from the 2000 Census was included in the 2008 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and the 2009 Master Plan reexamination report. Data from the 2010 Census is summarized in this report to determine its impact on planning issues.

### Population Trends

TABLE 1									
POPULATION TRENDS, 1930 TO 2010									
BOROUGH OF ROSELLE PARK, UNION COUNTY, NJ									
YEAR	Borough of Roselle Park			Union County			New Jersey		
	Change			Change			Change		
	Population	Number	Percent	Population	Number	Percent	Population	Number	Percent
1930	8,969	-	-	305,209	-	-	4041334	-	-
1940	9,661	692	7.72%	328,344	23,135	7.58%	4160165	118,831	2.94%
1950	11,537	1,876	19.42%	398,138	69,794	21.26%	4835329	675,164	16.23%
1960	12,546	1,009	8.75%	504,255	106,117	26.65%	6066782	1,231,453	25.47%
1970	14,277	1,731	13.80%	543,116	38,861	7.71%	7171112	1,104,330	18.20%
1980	13,377	-900	-6.30%	504,094	-39,022	-7.18%	7365011	193,899	2.70%
1990	12,805	-572	-4.28%	493,819	-10,275	-2.04%	7730188	365,177	4.96%
2000	13,281	476	3.72%	522,541	28,722	5.82%	8414350	684,162	8.85%
2010	13,297	16	0.12%	536,499	13,958	2.67%	8791894	377,544	4.49%

The population of Roselle Park generally remained the same from 2000 (13,281) to 2010 (13,297) with a minor increase of 16 people. Both Roselle Park and Union experienced similar growth patterns from 1930 to present with growth occurring from 1930-1970 and population losses occurring from 1970 to 1990. The state of NJ has experienced consistent growth from 1930 to 2010 as depicted in the table.

Table 2						
Population by Age, Year 2000 and 2010 - Borough of Roselle Park						
	2000		2010		Change, 2000 to 2010	
Population	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percent
Under 5	781	5.88%	798	6.00%	17	2.18%
Under 18	3,230	24.32%	2,939	22.10%	-291	-9.01%
18 to 65	8,371	63.03%	8,869	66.70%	498	5.95%
65 & Over	1,680	12.65%	1,489	11.20%	-191	-11.37%
total population	13,281	100.00%	13,297	100.00%	16	0.12%

The Borough of Roselle Park saw the largest change in in the 18 to 65 year old population from 2000 to 2010 with an increase of approximately 6 percent. A minor increase of 2.18% in children under 5 was recorded. As shown in the above table, a 9 percent decrease in minors under the age of 18 and an 11 percent decrease in seniors 65 and older was recorded.

Table 3						
Population by Age, Year 2000 and 2010 - Union County						
	2000		2010		Change, 2000 to 2010	
Population	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percent
Under 5	36,441	6.97%	35,945	6.70%	-496	-1.36%
Under 18	141,646	27.11%	131,442	24.50%	-10,204	-7.20%
18 to 65	308,854	59.11%	337,458	62.90%	28,604	9.26%
65 & Over	72,041	13.79%	67,599	12.60%	-4,442	-6.17%
total population	522,541	100.00%	536,499	100.00%	13,958	2.67%

Union County experienced the largest increase in the 18 to 65 year old population with an increase of approximately 9 percent and the similar decreases in the under 18 population (7 percent decrease) and the 65 and older population (6 percent decrease).

### Household Characteristics

Table 4				
Household Size - Persons Per Household - Roselle Park and Union County				
	2000		2010	
	Borough	County	Borough	County
Average Houshold Size (persons per household)	2.57	2.77	2.67	2.90

The average household size increased from 2.57 persons per household to 2.67 persons per household in the Borough and from 2.67 persons per household to 2.90 persons per household in the County as per Table 3 and represent a slight increase.

### Household Unit Data

Table 5				
Housing Data- Roselle Park				
	2000		2010	
	total	Percent	total	Percent
Owner Occupied	3,021	58.80	3,259	62.30
Renter Occupied	2,116	41.20	1972	37.70

According to the 2010 Census, Roselle Park had a total of 5,231 housing units, which is a slight decrease from the 5,258 units reported in the 2000 Census. Approximately 62 percent were owner occupied while approximately 38 percent were renter occupied which represent a slight increase in owner occupied housing units from 2000 Census data.

### Employment Data

Table 6				
Employment and Labor Force, 2000-2014 - Roselle Park				
Year	Resident Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2000	7728	7475	253	3.3%
2001	7739	7436	303	3.9%
2002	7832	7409	423	5.4%
2003	7816	7395	421	5.4%
2004	7746	7409	337	4.4%
2005	7748	7389	359	4.6%
2006	7825	7447	378	4.8%
2007	7761	7418	343	4.4%
2008	7836	7388	448	5.7%
2010	7523	6869	654	8.7%
2011	7573	6725	848	11.2%
2012	7720	6714	1006	13.0%
2013	7545	6488	1057	14.0%
2014	7625	6478	1147	15.0%

Table 6 shows the changes in employment data from 2000 to 2014 for the Borough of

Roselle Park. Unemployment rates began to spike in 2009 due to a nation-wide recession and have continued to increase as shown in the table. It is unclear when the job losses are expected to decline.

### **Commuting to Work**

As per the 2010 Census data, the mean travel time to work for those living in Roselle Park is approximately 30 minutes.

## **2. New Directions Vision Plan**

Although no changes or amendments were made to the New Directions Vision Plan, the major recommendations for the Chestnut Street Gateway, Westfield Avenue Streetscape, Transit-Oriented Development, Hawthorne Street Area, Area Surrounding Romerovski, Westfield Avenue, Department of Public Works Yard (DPW), Casano Community Center, Community Design Principles along with other recommendations in the report are still valid. As previously noted, the Borough is currently in the process of bidding the construction of a new, relocated DPW site so that the current DPW site can be redeveloped for senior citizen housing. The Borough is currently working with Catholic Charities to build affordable senior citizen housing on current DPW site.

## **3. Redevelopment Plan**

In 2016, the Borough designated the former Domani's Restaurant site and surrounding properties as an area in need of redevelopment and is recently adopted a redevelopment plan entitled the West Westfield Avenue Redevelopment Plan I.

## **4. Housing Element and Fair Share Plan**

The Borough adopted a new Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in 2009 and received an order maintaining and reaffirming the Borough's immunity from Mount Laurel Lawsuits on July 24, 2015 from the Superior Court of New Law Division Union County, Docket No: UNN-L-2061-15.

## **5. Westfield Avenue Streetscape Improvement Plan**

As recommended in the New Directions Report, the Borough began work with NJDOT to prepare a streetscape improvement plan for Westfield Avenue. A plan that incorporates physical treatments to the roadway, including crosswalk improvements, median treatment, sidewalk treatment, landscape improvements, signage and circulation improvements to enhance the appearance of the streetscape and improve its functionality is still a valid objective.

## **6. The Economy**

As illustrated by the employment data, Roselle Park has seen an increase in unemployment since the 2009 Master Plan Reexamination report.

## **RECOMMENDED CHANGES**

Many of the recommendations discussed in the New Directions report are still valid planning issues and should be incorporated into the Master Plan. The following changes to the Roselle Park Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance are recommended:

### **1. Land Use Plan Amendment**

The revitalization of Westfield Avenue is necessary for the Borough of Roselle Park given the economic conditions and job losses described in this report. The Land Use Plan element of the Master Plan should be amended to include many of the recommendations described in the New Directions Report regarding the revitalization of Westfield Avenue. The Borough should aggressively encourage new development on Westfield Avenue in order to promote more spending to occur within the Borough of Roselle Park. The New Directions Plan has already identified major underutilized parcels along Westfield Avenue, including the Chestnut Street gateway, the area surrounding the Romerovski redevelopment site and the area near Hawthorne Street where a number of underutilized and vacant properties exist. The Borough recently designated an Area In Need of Redevelopment which is centered on the former Domani's Restaurant Site.

In addition, the Borough has identified the following underutilized sites (***not ranked in any particular order***) that should be evaluated with respect to zoning and land use patterns to encourage new development opportunities:

1. East Westfield Avenue (Old Dry Cleaners Site)
2. Hawthorne Street (Old Lab Building Site)
3. West Westfield Avenue (Sullivan Property)
4. Lincoln Avenue and Locust Street (Ryan Property)
5. East Westfield Avenue (BrakeaRama Building)
6. East Westfield Avenue (From Apartments on south side to Linden Avenue)
7. East Westfield Avenue (from City of Elizabeth municipal boundary to Senior Care Building)
8. West Westfield Avenue (Old Movie Theatre)
9. West Westfield Avenue (Across from French's from Burger King to Railroad Bridge heading eastbound)
10. West Westfield Avenue (from MKL Supply to the New Location of McDonalds.
11. West Webster Avenue (South side from Locust Street to Little League Field)

## **2. Circulation Plan Amendment**

Implementation streetscape recommendations for Westfield Avenue through an amendment to the Borough's Circulation Plan Elements of the Master Plan is recommended. Improvements to the commuter rail system including the potential construction of a new commuter rail station on Westfield Avenue should also be given consideration.

## **3. Redevelopment of Key Sites**

The majority of the underutilized sites on Westfield Avenue are in the B-3 zone. Although the B-3 zone district permits a wide variety of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses, the existing zoning has failed to encourage any major new development. The Borough needs to take the necessary steps to encourage and guide the development of these parcels through either the reevaluation of the existing land use patterns and zoning along Westfield Avenue to determine if zone changes can encourage new development or by designating Westfield Avenue as an area in need of rehabilitation and by adopting a redevelopment plan for the entire area. A redevelopment designation would stimulate the re-utilization of the are in questions and allow the Borough to increase control over development patterns while also providing the flexibility of the redevelopment process.

## **4. Zoning Changes**

- a) Design Standards: Amend the zoning ordinance to include design standards that incorporate key principles of community planning and design
- b) Evaluate the B-3 zone district which is the primary zone for the Westfield Avenue corridor, in order to encourage new development.
- c) Minimize the impact of conflicting uses and protect the integrity of residential neighborhoods through enhanced screening requirements in non-residential zones. In addition the zoning map should be updated to recognize existing nonresidential areas to minimize potential support for granting future variances at the edges of residential neighborhoods.
- d) The Borough should consider revising its development regulations to conform to the Residential Uniform Site Improvement Standards Act.
- e) The Borough should consider eliminating the utilization of the NASICS Groups as it relates to the permissible uses in the zoning districts.
- f) The Development Regulations, Land Use Chapter XL should be amended to correct the typographical error with respect to maximum and minimum lot area at section 40-2703 A. 1. (previously 128-107.6 A. 1.)

## **STATUTORY PROVISIONS REGARDING THE LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING LAW**

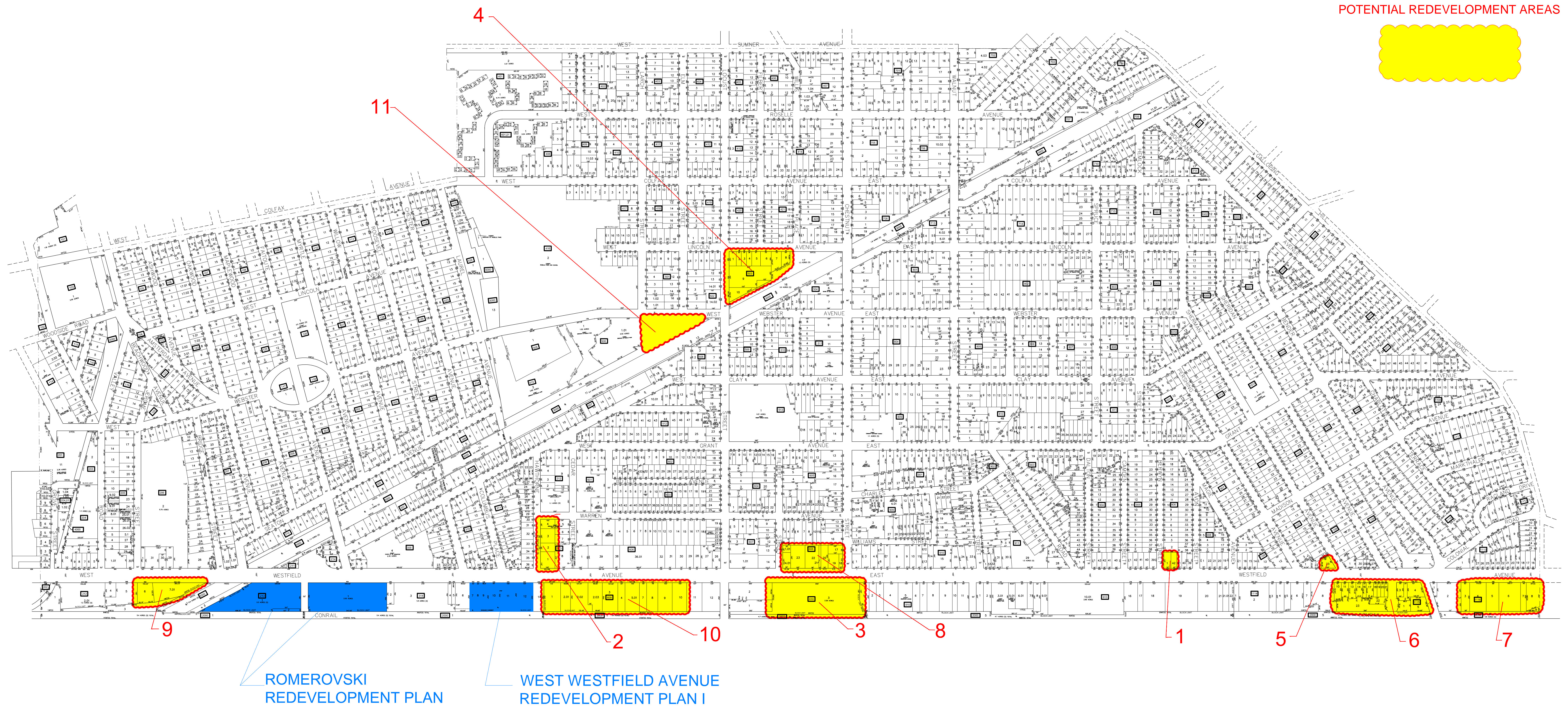
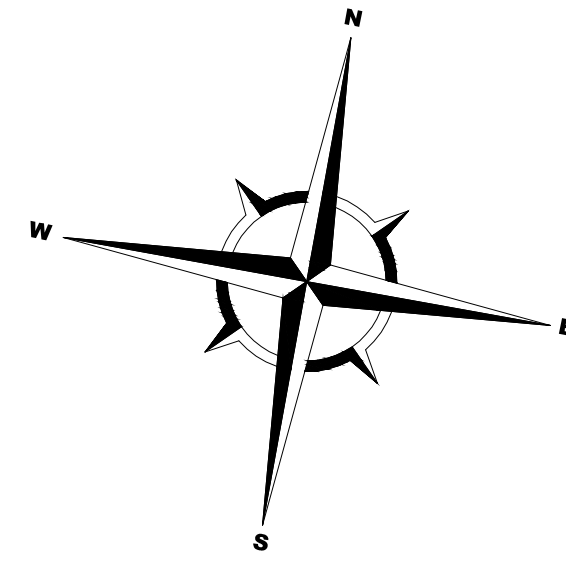
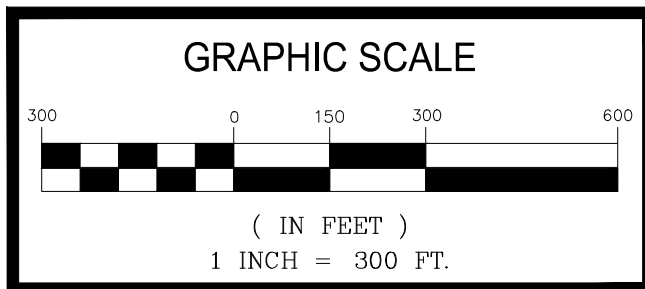
A reexamination report is required to consider whether any areas of the municipality are suitable for incorporation as redevelopment areas under the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL). Since the adoption of the 1997 Master Plan, the 2003 Master Plan Reexamination Report, and the 2009 Master Plan Reexamination report there have been two (2) redevelopment areas. The Romverovski Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 2007 and amended in 2008. The West Westfield Redevelopment Plan I redevelopment area was designated an area in need of redevelopment by the Borough in 2016 and the redevelopment plan was recently adopted by the Borough. Both redevelopment plans are consistent with the development recommendations in the Master Plan.

This latest Master Plan Reexamination Report recommends that the Borough consider the following additional sites listed below and shown on the attached map as potential redevelopment areas (***not ranked in any particular order***):

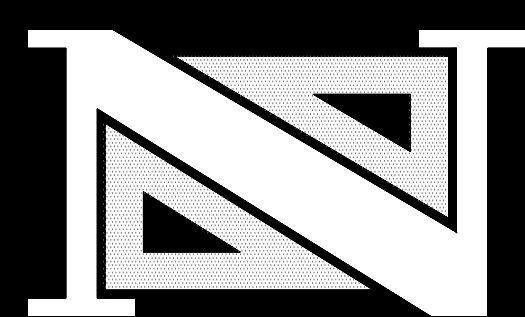
1. East Westfield Avenue (Old Dry Cleaners Site)
2. Hawthorne Street (Old Lab Building Site)
3. West Westfield Avenue (Sullivan Property)
4. Lincoln Avenue and Locust Street (Ryan Property)
5. East Westfield Avenue (BrakeaRama Building)
6. East Westfield Avenue (From Apartments on south side to Linden Avenue)
7. East Westfield Avenue (from City of Elizabeth municipal boundary to Senior Care Building)
8. West Westfield Avenue (Old Movie Theatre)
9. West Westfield Avenue (Across from French's from Burger King to Railroad Bridge heading eastbound)
10. West Westfield Avenue (from MKL Supply to the New Location of McDonalds.
11. West Webster Avenue (South side from Locust Street to Little League Field)

The above noted sites are underutilized and should be further evaluated and considered by the Borough as potential redevelopment areas to provide opportunities for new development.





REVISIONS					
NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	DESIGNED	CHECKED



A PROJECT OF  
**NEGLIA ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES**  
**34 PARK AVENUE**  
**LYNDHURST, NJ 07071**  
**PHONE: 201-939-8805**  
**FAX: 201-939-0846**

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**POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT AREAS**  
**2016 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT**  
**BOROUGH OF ROSELLE PARK**  
**COUNTY OF UNION**  
**NEW JERSEY**

DRAWN BY: AK	CHECKED BY: AK	PROJECT NO: RSPKMUN16.011	SHEET NO: MPRE - 1
DESIGNED BY: AK	SCALE: 1" = 300'	DATE: JUNE 7, 2016	
FIELD BOOK NO:	PAGE:		