

2003 MASTER PLAN RE-EXAMINATION
ROSELLE PARK, NEW JERSEY

Adopted 12/29/ 03

PLANNING BOARD

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INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (M.L.U.L.) grants substantial power to local planning boards to regulate land use and development. The foundation of this power is the ability to adopt a Master Plan, as is stated at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28:

The planning board may prepare and, after public hearing, adopt or amend a master plan, or component parts thereof, to guide the use of lands within the municipality in a manner which protects public health and safety and promotes the general welfare.

The Master Plan documents the current conditions of the municipality and addresses those issues that may have an impact on the community. According to the M.L.U.L., the plan must include "a statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the municipality are based." N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)(1)

A master plan also must include land use and housing plan elements and may include a number of other plan elements addressing topics such as circulation and community facilities. These elements may be divided into sub plan elements and may be prepared and adopted in sequences. Other required components of a master plan are policy statements indicating the master plan's relationship to the master plans of contiguous municipalities, to the county master plan, to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and to the county's district solid waste management plan.

The M.L.U.L. requires a master plan be revised periodically. N.J.S.A. § 40:55D-89 states that at least once every six years a general re-examination of a municipality's master plan and development regulations shall be prepared by the planning board. Roselle Park's most recent Master plan was adopted in 1997. The 2003 Roselle Park Master Plan Re-Examination Report updates this document and includes the following five sections in accordance with 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 Master Plan.
- 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 the state, county, and municipal policies and objectives.

d. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives and standards or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.

e. The recommendations of the Planning Board concerning the incorporation of re-development plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Re-development and Housing Law," P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) 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.

In compiling this re-examination report, the Roselle Park Planning Board relied on the most recent demographic statistics provided by the Union County Economic Development Corp. A copy of these statistics is attached and incorporated into the re-examination report.

The remainder of this report is comprised of these five elements:

A. MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES RELATING TO LAND DEVELOPMENT IN ROSELLE PARK AT THE TIME OF THE LAST MASTER PLAN

At the time the most recent Roselle Park Master Plan was completed, the Borough was almost fully developed, Areas targeted for possible development at that time were:

- * Block 503, Lots 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9: zoned Planned Development District.
- * Block 3000, Lot 14: zoned Senior Citizen Housing District.

Overall, the predominant land use in the Borough was residential, with 44.7 percent of dwelling units located in structures containing two or more units.

The 1997 Master Plan identified 22 objectives relating to land use and development, identified below:

Land Use - Residential

1. Preserve and protect the integrity of Roselle Park's residential neighborhoods to maintain them as desirable environments.
2. Reduce housing turnover by encouraging home ownership opportunities and discouraging the creation of illegal rental apartments in existing homes.

3. Provide opportunities for the creation of senior citizen housing.
4. Rezone underutilized properties to capitalize on the Borough's existing resources, such as access to mass transit and highway accessibility.

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.
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.
3. Improve the appearance of the CBD through implementation of a streetscape improvement program, support for façade improvements and the adoption of design standards.
4. Revise the zoning for commercial districts to differentiate between uses permitted in the CBD and uses permitted along arterial roadways.

Land Use - Industrial

1. Upgrade the older industrial areas of the Borough in order to maintain jobs and preserve the nonresidential tax base.

Community Design

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

Circulation

1. Provide for the safe and efficient movement of persons and goods throughout the Borough.

2. Provide an ongoing street maintenance program to prevent disrepair.
3. Rehabilitate the train station by coordinating with New Jersey Transit and seeking federal/state funding.
4. Improve public transportation services by providing shelters for public bus stops in appropriate locations.

Community Facilities

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

Parks and Recreation

1. Provide additional space to support the increasing recreational demands of Borough residents.
2. Provide pedestrian connections between existing and proposed recreational facilities, where possible.

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.
- 2.

The Land Use element of the 1997 Master Plan also identified several "problem" areas, as discussed below.

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 existing nonresidential areas to minimize potential support for granting future use variances at the edges of residential neighborhoods.

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. As of April, 1990, almost 50 percent of the households in the Borough had moved into their residence within the last five years. 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.

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. As discussed in the 1989 plan, the Borough captures very little local consumption spending. At least 50 percent of local consumer expenditures are made outside of the Borough.

Part of the problem is that there is not a large enough critical mass to create a vital business district and more stores are needed to become a destination location. An additional problem is the relatively small size of the properties in the CBD, especially in light of the superstore trend in the retail industry. It is suggested that the CBD be expanded to include underutilized properties on Westfield Avenue to encourage future redevelopment of commercial uses in the area. In addition a comprehensive streetscape improvement program and an expanded promotional program is needed to help improve the image of the CBD. The Community Design element includes a comprehensive streetscape plan for the CBD defining street furnishings, street trees, signage and banners.

Senior Citizen Housing

The number of senior citizens in the Borough is anticipated to start to increase in about ten years. This trend is anticipated as the "baby boom" generation, defined as those individuals born between 1946 and 1964, more into the retirement age bracket. Associated with this trend will be an increase in demand for senior citizen housing. In order to provide opportunities for senior citizens to remain within the Borough after retirement, it is suggested that the Borough identify an appropriate location for construction of senior citizen housing.

B. EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR HAVE INCREASED SINCE 1997

The Land Use Issues or "problem" areas affecting the Borough are listed below. It is the opinion of the Board that the "problem" areas have not undergone any significant change since the adoption of the 1997 Master Plan.

Neighborhood Preservation - Unchanged.

Housing Turnover - Unchanged.

Central Business District - Unchanged.

Senior Citizen Housing - Unchanged.

Objectives

In the opinion of the Board, the objectives set forth in Chapter I of the 1997 Master Plan have neither increased nor decreased subsequent to that date, with the following exceptions:

Land Use: Residential

1. Unchanged
2. The objective has increased since 1997 through aggressive Code Enforcement.
3. The objective has increased since 1997 through several means; the creation of a non-profit organization to secure Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant funds, and negotiations with Conrail to acquire property.
4. The objective has increased since 1997 through the rezoning of two parcels as Planned Development District and Senior Citizen District.

Land Use - Commercial

1. Unchanged.
2. Unchanged.
3. Unchanged.
4. This objective has decreased since 1997; objective has not been met.

Land Use - Industrial

1. Objective has been reduced; general trend is a decline in the Industrial Businesses throughout the State.

Community Design

1. Unchanged.
2. Unchanged.
3. Unchanged.

Circulation

1. Unchanged.
2. Unchanged.
3. Objective is decreasing because Roselle Park Borough planned improvements to train station parking lot in a joint venture between Roselle Park and New Jersey Department of Transportation.
4. In regard to the construction of bus-stop shelters, the possibilities were examined and the shelters that were acceptable to New Jersey Transit would have run counter to the standards of Community Design Objectives set forth in the Master Plan. Although bus stop shelters will remain an objective, the Planning Board accepts the reality of the situation and regards the objective as unattainable in the current climate.

Community Facilities

1. Unchanged
2. This objective has been increased as evidenced by the acquisition of property on 106 E. Westfield Avenue, as well as the property at 232 Chestnut Street being acquired and developed; and the construction of a storage facility on the green acres site.
3. Unchanged.

Parks and Recreation

1. With the addition of the Signorello Youth Center on Chestnut Street the need for recreational space to support the needs of Borough Youth has been greatly reduced.
2. Objective has increased to include bicycle traffic.

Compatibility of Planning Efforts - objective remains unchanged.

C. EXTENT TO WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES FORMING THE BASIS OF THE MASTER PLAN.

Objectives: After careful examination, the Planning Board has concluded that there have been no significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis of the Master Plan Regulations

D. SPECIFIC CHANGES RECOMMENDED FOR THE MASTER PLAN OR DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

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 document.
2. Due to the potential re-activation of the freight line along the Rahway Valley Rail Line and any future reactivation or any possible future re-activation of the Central Jersey Line, considerations should be given made to revising regulations with respect to include, but not limited to: environmental, economic, traffic, public safety, and quality of life concerns.
3. The Borough should consider reviewing and upgrading the permitted uses and bulk requirements in the industrial zoning districts.
4. The Borough should consider revising its development regulations to determine conformity with with the Residential Uniform Site Improvement Standards Act.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE INCORPORATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLANS INTO THE MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS.

Provisions for redevelopment plans and development regulations are governed by the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, which was adopted in 1992. After reviewing the official zoning map for the Borough of Roselle Park and all available land inventory, The Roselle Park Planning Board has determined that no area in the Borough should be designated as a redevelopment area or zone at this time.

CONCLUSION:

After careful examination and consideration, The Planning Board has come to the conclusion there are no significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis of the 1997 Master Plan for the Borough of Roselle Park. It is therefore recommended that the Master Plan be left unchanged.

APPENDIX

Roselle Park Municipal Profile
as prepared by
The Union County Economic Development Corporation