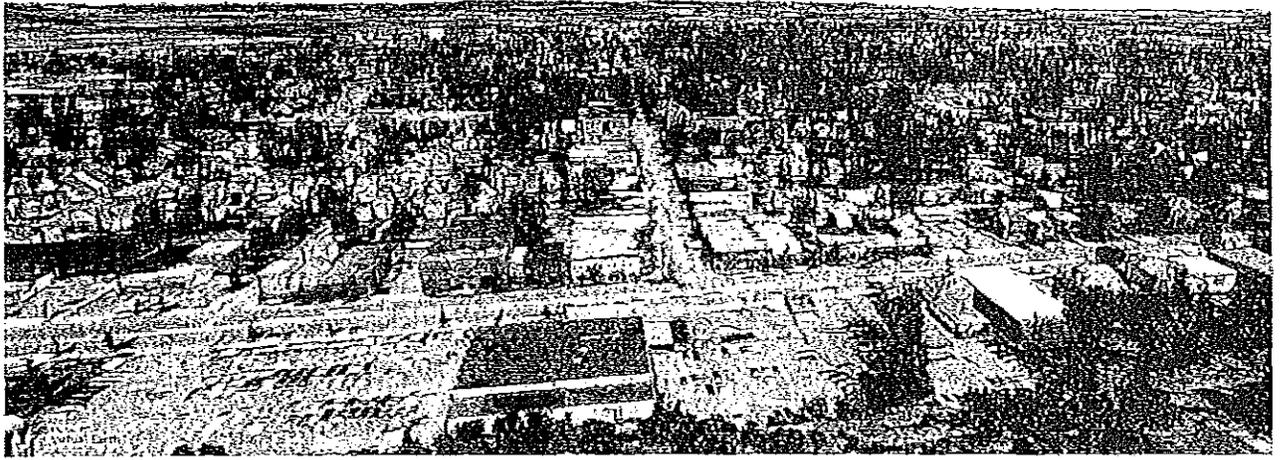


Master Plan Reexamination Report

Borough of Roselle Park, Union County, New Jersey



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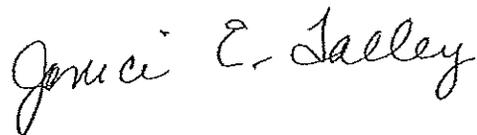
Master Plan Reexamination Report

Borough of Roselle Park, Union County

Prepared for:
Roselle Park Planning Board

Adopted December 14, 2009

The original of this report was signed and
sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A 45:14A-12



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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 and a Master Plan Reexamination Report in 2003. 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 Element and Fair Share Plan on December 15, 2008 and an amended Romerovski Redevelopment Plan in February 2009. The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that municipalities conduct a general reexamination of their master plans at least every six years and that the review be conducted by the Planning Board.

A Reexamination Report must include five key elements, which include:

- 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 revisited, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land use, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable material, 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 regulation should be prepared;
- e. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Housing and Redevelopment 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 has been prepared to meet the statutory requirement as specified under the MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40-55D-89).

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MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES FROM THE 2003 ROSELLE PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY HAVE INCREASED OR DECREASED

As required by the Municipal Land Use Law, this Master Plan Reexamination Report includes an evaluation of the major problems and goals and objectives indicated in the 2003 Master Plan Reexamination Report. This section also evaluates the extent to which these objectives and problems have increased or decreased. This addresses the requirements of N.J.S.A. 40-55D-89a. and b. of the Municipal Land Use Law.

Objectives

The 2003 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 environments. ***Objective is still valid.***
2. Reduce housing turnover by encouraging home ownership opportunities and discouraging the creation of illegal rental apartments in existing homes. ***The Borough has instituted an aggressive code enforcement program to address the problem of illegal rental apartments. Objective is still valid.***
3. Provide opportunities for the creation of senior citizen housing. ***The Borough has identified a site to build a senior citizen housing project. This site currently contains the Borough's DPW yard. The Borough is negotiating with Conrail to acquire property for a new 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 100 units of affordable senior housing on this site. 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 has rezoned two parcels for new uses, including a Planned Development District and a Senior Housing District. Objective is still valid. The Borough has also adopted a redevelopment plan for the Romerovski industrial complex to build 249 rental units, including 37 affordable units.***

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. ***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. ***Though to date there has been little redevelopment activity of these parcels, this objective is still valid.***
3. Improve the appearance of the CBD through implementation of a streetscape improvement program, support for facade improvements and the adoption of design standards. ***The Borough has created a Special Improvement District (SID) for the CBD. The SID has funded some improvements to the CBD streetscape, but they have limited funds available. A façade***

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improvement program is still recommended, as is the adoption of design standards. 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. *No action has been taken to address this issue. 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 has continued to decline, as the local and regional economy has continued to change to a service-based economy. In light of this fact, the Borough has adopted a redevelopment plan for the Romerovski industrial complex on Westfield Avenue. The redevelopment plan calls for the construction of 249 residential units, including 37 affordable units. This objective has decreased and should be replaced with a new objective to create jobs and attract 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 the safe and efficient movement of persons and goods throughout the Borough. *Objective is still valid.*
2. Provide an ongoing street 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. *The Borough has created a new zoning district called the Planned Development district for the properties surrounding the train station. Redevelopment around the train station will provide an incentive for NJ Transit to rehabilitate the train station. An application to develop this property, however, was denied by the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Objective is still valid.*
4. Improve public transportation services by providing shelters for public bus stops in appropriate locations. *The possibility of new bus shelters was examined by the Borough and the shelters that were acceptable to New Jersey Transit ran counter to the Community Design objectives in the Master Plan. The Planning Board will continue to seek opportunities for new bus shelters, with emphasis on incorporating appropriately designed shelters with redevelopment projects. Objective is still valid.*

Community Facilities

1. Maintain a high level of municipal services to Roselle Park residents and nonresidential taxpayers. *Objective is still valid.*

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2. Provide community facilities that meet local needs and respond to the varying demands of different demographic groups. *The Borough has acquired the property at 106 E. Westfield Avenue for a parking lot and the property at 232 Chestnut Street for the Signorello Youth Center. While objective is being actively implemented, it is still valid.*
3. Maintain and improve existing Borough resources rather than constructing or acquiring major new facilities. *Objective is still valid.*

Parks and Recreation

1. Provide additional space to support the increasing recreational demands of Borough residents. *The need for additional space has been greatly reduced with the addition of the Signorello Youth Center on Chestnut Street. Objective is still valid.*
2. Provide pedestrian connections between existing and proposed recreational facilities, where possible. *Objective is still valid and should be expanded to include 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 2003 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 existing nonresidential areas to minimize potential support for granting future use variances at the edges of residential neighborhoods. *The zoning ordinance has not been amended to address these issues. The Borough's commercial lots are relatively shallow, with little room available for landscaped buffers. Fencing alternatives provide a more realistic approach.*

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. *Although this problem has been addressed through an aggressive code enforcement program, it is still a problem.*

Central Business Districts

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

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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 are needed to help improve the image of the CBD. The Community Design element includes a comprehensive streetscape plan for the CBD including street furnishings, street trees, signage and banners. *The CBD zone district has been expanded to include a portion of Westfield Avenue. The Borough has created a Special Improvement District for the CBD and has been working with NJDOT to create a comprehensive streetscape improvement program for Westfield Avenue.*

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, move 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. *As stated previously, the Borough has identified the current DPW site as a site for senior citizen housing, and has entered into negotiations with Conrail to acquire property for a new DPW facility. The Borough is currently working with Catholic Charities to provide 100 units of affordable senior housing on this site.*

Recommendations

1. The Board recommends the following change 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. *This change has not been made and is still valid.*
2. Due to the potential re-activation 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 recommendation is still valid.*
3. The Borough should consider reviewing and upgrading the permitted uses and bulk requirements in the industrial zoning districts. *This has not been completed and the recommendation 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.*

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SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS, POLICES AND OBJECTIVES

1. 2000 Census

The results of the 2000 Census were not available when the 2003 Master Plan Reexamination Report was prepared. Demographic and employment information from the 2000 Census was included in the 2008 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and is summarized in this report to determine its impact on planning issues.

Population Trends

After twenty years of population decline, the population of Roselle Park increased from 12,805 in 1990 to 13,281 in 2000, an increase of 476 people or 3.72% from 1990, as shown in Table 1. Roselle Park experienced growth from 1930 to 1970 followed by population losses in the 1970's and 1980's. Union County experienced a similar growth pattern to Roselle Park, but the State has experienced consistent growth from 1930 through 2000. The recent in growth in population is attributable, in part, to the increase in household size from 2.53 persons per household in 1990 to 2.57 persons per household in 2000. In addition, there are 27 more housing units between 1990 and 2000, and 67 more occupied housing units (fewer vacancies) than in 1990. All of these factors have contributed to the Borough's increase in population.

Year	Roselle Park			Union County			New Jersey		
	Population	Change		Population	Change		Population	Change	
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
1930	8,969	-	-	305,209	-	-	4,041,334	-	-
1940	9,661	692	7.72	328,344	23,135	7.58	4,160,165	118,831	2.94
1950	11,537	1,876	19.42	398,138	69,794	21.26	4,835,329	675,164	16.23
1960	12,546	1,009	8.75	504,255	106,117	26.65	6,066,782	1,231,453	25.47
1970	14,277	1,731	13.80	543,116	38,861	7.71	7,171,112	1,104,330	18.20
1980	13,377	-900	-6.30	504,094	-39,022	-7.18	7,365,011	193,899	2.70
1990	12,805	-572	-4.28	493,819	-10,275	-2.04	7,730,188	365,177	4.96
2000	13,281	476	3.72	522,541	28,722	5.82	8,414,350	684,162	8.85

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The Borough of Roselle is largely a starter home community, attracting households with children in the 5 to 14 age category. Between 1990 and 2000, the Borough saw the largest changes in the 5 to 14 age and 45 to 54 age cohorts, which experienced increases of 20.6% and 40.3% respectively. The 25 to 34 cohort experienced the largest decline, a decrease of 19.3%, as indicated in Table 2.

Population	1990		2000		Change, 1990 to 2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	683	5.33	781	5.88	98	14.35
5 to 14	1,400	10.93	1,689	12.72	289	20.64
15 to 24	1,700	13.28	1,654	12.45	-46	-2.71
25 to 34	2,629	20.53	2,121	15.97	-508	-19.32
35 to 44	1,971	15.39	2,331	17.55	360	18.26
45 to 54	1,333	10.41	1,870	14.08	537	40.29
55 to 64	1,241	9.69	1,155	8.70	-86	-6.93
65 and over	1,848	14.43	1,680	12.65	-168	-9.09
Total	12,805	100.00	13,281	100.00	476	3.72

The County experienced the largest increases in the 5 to 14 and 45 to 54 age cohorts, and the largest decrease in the 25 to 34-age cohort. The median age in Roselle Park was 36.7 years in 2000.

Population	1990		2000		Change, 1990 to 2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	32,421	6.6	36,441	7	4,020	12.3
5 to 14	58,291	11.8	73,754	14.1	15,463	26.5
15 to 24	64,984	13.2	61,215	11.7	-3,769	-5.8
25 to 34	85,028	17.2	75,189	14.4	-9,839	-11.8
35 to 44	73,653	14.9	88,398	16.9	14,745	20
45 to 54	54,844	11.1	69,568	13.3	14,724	26.5
55 to 64	50,440	10.2	45,935	8.8	-4,505	-8.9
65 and over	74,125	15	72,041	13.8	-2,084	-2.8
Total	493,786	100	522,541	100	28,755	5.8

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Household Characteristics

A household is defined as one or more persons, whether related or not, living together in a dwelling unit. In 2000, there were a total of 5,137 households in Roselle Park, as shown in Table 4. The average number of persons per household for the Borough in 2000 was 2.57, lower than the County's average of 2.77. This represents a slight increase from 1990, when the average household size in the Borough was 2.53. Both the Borough and the County generally mirrored each other in the statistical distribution of household sizes. For both the Borough and the County 2-person households represent the largest household size grouping (28.3% and 28.6% respectively).

	Borough	Percent	County	Percent
Total	5,137	100	186,124	100
1-person household	1,448	28.19	43,918	23.60
2-person household	1,454	28.30	53,208	28.60
3-person household	870	16.94	33,668	18.10
4-person household	805	15.67	30,852	16.60
5-person household	368	7.16	14,860	8.00
6-person household	134	2.61	5,667	3.00
7-or-more-person household	58	1.13	3,951	2.10
Average Household Size 2000	2.57		2.77	
Average Household Size 1990	2.53			

Family households are defined as two or more persons, living in the same household related by blood, marriage or adoption. The largest number of households in the Borough were family-households comprising 66.4%, as indicated in Table 5. Furthermore, the majority of all households were married-couple families (50.81%), with 23.83% of them having children under the age of 18. Only 28.19% of households were one-person households with 15.5% being female and 12.7% being male.

In providing more detail than previous years, the 2000 Census included the sub-groups of non-traditional households (Other family) and of non-family households. Non-family households are defined as households that consist of a householder living alone or where the householder shares the home exclusively with people whom he/she is not related. Non-family households comprised 15.67% of the Borough, while other family households were 5.33%.

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Table 5 Household Size and Type Roselle Park Borough		
	Total	Percent
	5,137	100
1-person household:	1448	28.19
Male householder	652	12.69
Female householder	796	15.50
2 or more person household:	3,689	71.81
Family households:	3,415	66.48
Married-couple family:	2,610	50.81
With own children under 18 years	1224	23.83
No own children under 18 years	1386	26.98
Other family:	805	15.67
Male householder, no wife present:	229	4.46
With own children under 18 years	73	1.42
No own children under 18 years	156	3.04
Female householder, no husband present:	576	11.21
With own children under 18 years	251	4.89
No own children under 18 years	325	6.33
Non-family households:	274	5.33
Male householder	144	2.80
Female householder	130	2.53

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Housing Unit Data

The housing stock of the Borough is predominantly single-family detached dwelling units, with most dwellings built before 1939 (37.6%). Significantly, of the total housing units in the Borough, 3,021 or 57% were owner occupied while 2,116 or 41% were renter occupied. The percentage of owner-occupied units has decreased slightly since 1990, while the percentage of renter-occupied units has increased slightly since 1990.

According to the 2000 Census, Roselle Park had a total of 5,258 housing units. This is a slight increase from the 5,231 units in 1990. Of the housing units in structure, 3,021 or 57% were owner occupied while 2,116 or 40% were renter occupied. The highest percentage of structures (37.6%) was built prior to 1940 with another large surge between 1950 and 1959. The median year built was 1948.

	1990		2000	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Housing Units				
Total	5,231	100.00	5,258	100.00
Total Occupied	5,070	96.9	5,137	97.7
Tenure				
Owner occupied	2,990	59.0	3,021	58.8
Renter occupied	2,080	41.0	2,116	41.2
Year Structure Built				
Built 1995 to March 2000			29	0.6
Built 1990 to 1994			20	0.4
Built 1980 to 1989			61	1.2
Built 1970 to 1979			399	7.6
Built 1960 to 1969			935	17.8
Built 1950 to 1959			1,048	19.9
Built 1940 to 1949			788	15.0
Built 1939 or earlier			1,978	37.6
Median year structure built			1948	

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Employment Trends

The following tables detail changes in employment from 1994 to 2008 for Roselle Park. The number of those who are employed has increased over the last decade as the labor force has increased overall. Roselle Park over the past ten years has had a similar unemployment rate to both the County and the State. The Borough has seen its unemployment rate drop and increase in synch with national economic trends. The rate was lowest in 2000 (3.3%) and the highest in 1994 (6.3%). In 2008, the most recent year for municipal data, the unemployment rate in Roselle Park was 5.7%.

Unemployment, however, has spiked dramatically in 2009 due to a nation-wide recession. The unemployment rate for New Jersey in January 2008 was 4.6 percent. By January 2009, unemployment had increased to 7.3 percent, and by September 2009, unemployment increased even more to 9.8 percent, a 100 percent increased from January 2008 and the highest level in over 20 years. These effects are being felt locally as residents in Roselle Park are losing jobs, and it is unclear when the job losses are expected to decline.

	Resident Labor Force	Resident Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
1994	7,396	6,928	468	6.3
1995	7,480	7,049	431	5.8
1996	7,555	7,134	421	5.6
1997	7,662	7,299	363	4.7
1998	7,575	7,256	319	4.2
1999	7,697	7,371	326	4.2
2000	7,728	7,475	253	3.3
2001	7,739	7,436	303	3.9
2002	7,832	7,409	423	5.4
2003	7,816	7,395	421	5.4
2004	7,746	7,409	337	4.4
2005	7,748	7,389	359	4.6
2006	7,825	7,447	377	4.8
2007	7,761	7,418	343	4.4
2008	7,836	7,388	448	5.7

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Covered Employment

The tables below provide a snapshot of employees working within Roselle Park. The first table reflects the number of jobs covered by private unemployment insurance from 1993 through 2008. The second table reflects the disbursement of jobs by industry and salaries in 2003.

Covered employment within Roselle Park has been on the decline since 1993. The rate of decline has increased since 2003, a product of the regional and global economic downturn. The largest number of jobs was within the health care and social assistance industry, though both the wholesale trade and retail trade industries also represent sizable portions of local employment. Employees of the transportation and warehousing industry receive the highest average annual wage.

Year	Number of Jobs	# Change	% Change
1993	1,969		
1998	1,878	91	-4.6
2003	1,816	62	-3.3
2008	1,486	330	-18.2

*Third Quarter Numbers

INDUSTRY	Employment		Annual Wages
	Jobs	Percent	
Construction	159	8.8	\$42,279
Manufacturing	150	8.3	\$38,393
Wholesale trade	201	11.1	\$25,305
Retail trade	213	11.7	\$33,845
Transportation and warehousing	190	10.5	\$48,230
Information	58	3.2	\$43,873
Finance and insurance	67	3.7	\$38,270
Real estate and rental and leasing	30	1.7	\$24,680
Administrative and waste services	104	5.7	\$31,682
Health care and social assistance	254	14.0	\$39,198
Accommodation and food services	224	12.3	\$12,905
Other services, except public administration	82	4.5	\$28,246
Total/ Average	1,816		\$33,300

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Commuting to Work

According to the 2000 Census, the mean travel time to work for those who lived in Roselle Park was approximately twenty-six minutes. Approximately 10% of workers traveled more than an hour to work, while approximately 32% had commute times 15 minutes or less. The largest proportion of workers commuted alone by automobile (74.8%), while only 9.7% carpooled. Public transportation was utilized by 8.55% of workers.

	Number	Percent
Total	7,054	100.00
Worked at home	92	1.30
Less than 10 minutes	1,246	17.66
10 to 14 minutes	946	13.41
15 to 19 minutes	1,003	14.22
20 to 24 minutes	831	11.78
25 to 29 minutes	378	5.36
30 to 34 minutes	972	13.78
35 to 44 minutes	413	5.85
45 to 59 minutes	441	6.25
60 to 89 minutes	503	7.13
90 or more minutes	229	3.25
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	25.9	

	Number	Percent
Workers 16 years and over	7,054	100.00
Car, truck, or van		
Drove alone	5,279	74.84
Carpooled	685	9.71
Public transportation	603	8.55
Walked	332	4.71
Other means	63	0.89
Worked at home	92	1.30

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2. New Directions Vision Plan

In 2006, Mayor Delorio commissioned the preparation of a Vision Plan for Roselle Park to provide a blueprint for the future. The final plan, completed in January 2007, is entitled Roselle Park: New Directions and included a significant public participation and educational campaign designed to solicit community input and support for the long-term growth and viability of the Roselle Park. The major recommendations in the Plan include the following:

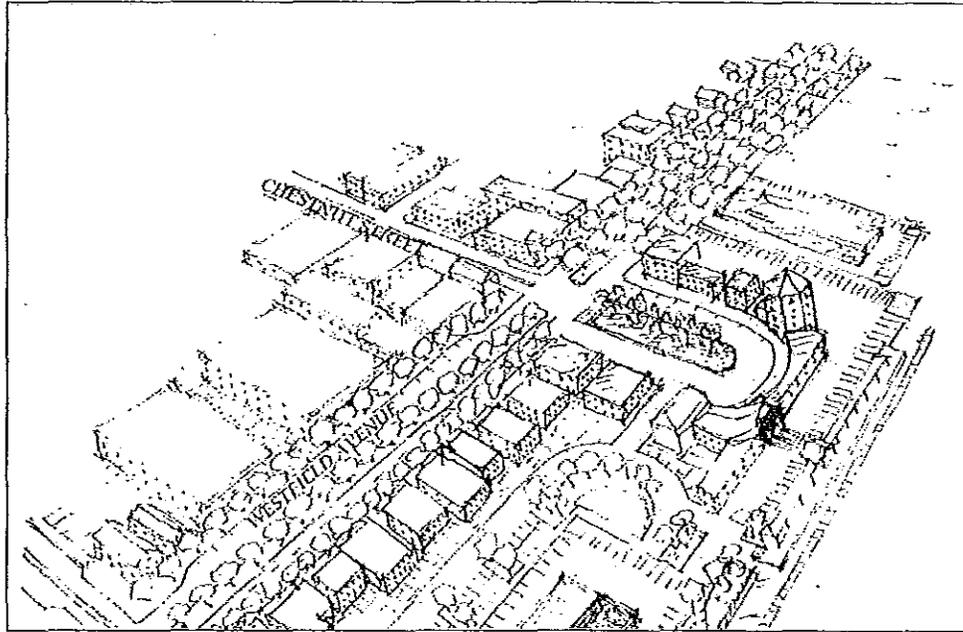
Chestnut Street Gateway

Westfield Avenue presents Roselle Park with a tremendous redevelopment opportunity. As such, a comprehensive approach to this area should be considered where 1-2 blocks east and west of Chestnut would be analyzed and planned to be integrated into the Downtown. The Downtown could greatly benefit from several improvements. These improvements would be best coordinated through a redevelopment plan as multiple properties along Westfield Avenue as they exist today work against the central business district along Chestnut Street. Coordinating design elements and land uses are essential to the long-term success of the Downtown. Taking on this project in concert with the goals of the Special Improvement District will solidify the Borough as a "place to be" in Union County. The report concludes that the following principles be considered within this prospective planning effort:

1. The Borough should engage NJ DOT to discuss the long-term needs of the Borough namely Route 28 (Westfield Avenue). Westfield Avenue must be calmed and aesthetically treated. Potential to revive Fredrick Olmstead's Boulevard design of the Avenue also exists. Pedestrian considerations are vital to the Downtown's success.
2. The Borough should engage Union County to discuss the long-term needs of Chestnut Street-particularly as it interfaces with State Highway 28, Westfield Avenue.
3. The Terminal view of Chestnut Street should be treated as "signature", thus linking together both sides of Westfield Avenue physically, aesthetically, and socially.
4. Architectural treatments to new structures should act to complement the existing important historical architecture within the Borough. This is not to say contemporary or modern architecture should be discouraged, but rather encouraged to be complementary.
5. Parking should be integrated into the existing parking system in the Borough. Where possible, parking should be strategically located to support the existing business community and new development. Surface parking should discouraged or hidden from views along the street frontage of the Downtown.
6. The potential of a new light rail station should continue to be explored and integrated into the plan.
7. Land uses should be consistent with traditional Downtown or Central Business District uses. Ground level retail should be mandatory. Buildings should be mixed-use with new residential opportunities and office space above retail. Residential units should be designed to target empty nesters and young professionals.

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Westfield Avenue Streetscape

Westfield Avenue is a corridor that serves a regional transportation need but fails to respect the local needs of the Borough. An integrated approach where the road and land uses are coordinated is extremely important, particularly near the central business district at the intersection of Chestnut Street. As such, an appropriately scaled Boulevard is an appropriate pursuit. Creating a more aesthetically pleasing design while calming traffic will add tremendous value to the community while announcing one's arrival into the Borough of Roselle Park. Regional traffic patterns are important but must be respectful of towns these roadways traverse. The discussion that ensues with NJ DOT should also involve the State Department of Community Affairs, Office of Smart Growth as well as NJ Transit. These agencies specialize in assisting communities through their interagency Smart Growth Team. The redesign of Westfield Avenue is tantamount to the success within the Borough's core.

Transit-Oriented Development.

Development near the existing rail station could build upon on this tremendous resource. By capitalizing on this fantastic asset as many communities along the Raritan Valley Line have, Roselle Park can effectively strengthen its market through Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) practices. Some of the principles to consider are:

1. Pedestrianism should be the core principle guiding development patterns and road treatments.
2. Connection and integration with Chestnut Street. Encouraging a smooth transition from station to the existing business districts.
3. Both sides of station need consideration as access points.
4. Design sensitivity toward the surrounding neighborhood.

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Hawthorne Street Area

Several properties present different opportunities from a community development perspective.

1. The area should be looked at as a cohesive whole.
2. Consideration of the entire western section of Westfield Avenue.
3. Explore a re-design the 5+-acre stormwater basin on Hawthorne itself. Given the limitations of available land for new park space, this site could serve multiple functions.
4. Great opportunity for age-restricted housing at the Laberco Site.
5. Explore opportunities for public/private investments as potential development of Laberco may interface with a new park. A rezoning of the Area may be the most appropriate means to ensuring the most appropriate use of the site. However, review of the Basin should be explored and included into the site design should some form of housing be located on Laberco.

Area Surrounding Romerovski

Given the proximity to West Clay Avenue and its direct access to the rail station as well as the other roads in the circulation system, more can be done to tie in Westfield Avenue to the rest of the community rather than continuing to let it be a barrier.

Westfield Avenue

In its entirety, Westfield Avenue or Route 28 presents unique challenges from a land use perspective. While it is important that the Borough continue to address the roadway's design with NJ DOT, the Borough must also review its land uses and their relationship and impact on the road. This report details several areas that require advanced attention. However, the needs of the entire corridor must also be reviewed, particularly at the Borough's "Gateway" entries at each end of the road. Some key available properties exist along the corridor and present the opportunity to implement some projects that will work for the Borough's benefit.

Department of Public Works Yard (DPW)

Some community input focused on the DPW facility. While the public work's operations are outside of the scope of this project it is appropriate to comment that the highest and best utilization of this property should be investigated. Whether portions of the property may become available for other public uses such as an organic waste recycling facility, or redesigned to be better integrated into the neighborhood, should be thoroughly explored and discussed. Regardless, aesthetic treatments to the site through adequate buffering from the existing neighborhood while improving the site's appearance should be pursued.

Casano Community Center

The Casano Community Center is an extremely well utilized public facility. As such, the Borough should consider purchase of land adjacent to the Center for potential expansion. Whether the land is utilized for more building space or, as depicted, the space is utilized for open play area and future additions are constructed on top of the existing center, more space for this valued asset is desirable.

Community Design Principles

Key principles of community planning and design are recommended to be included in any and all planning projects.

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1. Design should be first consideration when reviewing projects. Building types that complement the existing development patterns should be encouraged. Connections, whether present day or for future consideration, should always be a consideration.
2. Further community education on the demographics associated with certain types of housing (and their impacts on the school system) need to be fully understood by the entire Borough and its residents before planning for housing options other than senior citizen. Senior citizen housing also needs to explore its impacts on Borough services.
3. Usable public open space should be required/considered, or payments in lieu of, within all new major developments.
4. Local Retail- New investment & improvement opportunities for small businesses need to be aggressively administered. There seems to be a desire and need for new attractions and businesses, located in a walkable distance, to supplement the existing business atmosphere. New projects should detail their retail component and prepare a list of retailers that will occupy new space.
5. Examination and Expansion of the Jitney service to serve the community. Routes in relation to new development and potential ridership should be routinely examined.
6. Light Rail Extension should continue to be monitored with the County along the abandoned Central Jersey Rail Line.

Other Recommendations

1. Create the position of Director of Community and Economic Development.
2. Create a Borough-wide Area in Need of Redevelopment.
3. Consider mixed-use development in areas served by transit.
4. Coordinate with Union County to initiate a GIS mapping program.

3. Redevelopment Plan

In 2006, the Borough Council designated the Romerovski site as an area in need of redevelopment in 2006 and on March 1, 2007, a redevelopment plan for the Romerovski site was adopted by the Borough Council. Since then, however, a builder's remedy lawsuit was filed by the developer contesting the redevelopment plan. The Borough entered into mediation with the developer and the court, and on February 18, 2009, adopted an amended redevelopment plan for the old Romerovski factory on Westfield Avenue. The Plan permits a total of 249 units, including 37 affordable units. The plan includes design standards to ensure that the buildings, which will be 4 stories plus a loft, are consistent with the historic nature of the existing buildings on the site.

4. Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

The Borough adopted a new Housing Element and Fair Share Plan on December 15, 2008 and petitioned COAH for substantive certification. The Fair Share Plan includes the following:

1. Rehabilitation of 96 housing units through the Union County program and a local program to be funded through local revenues and a Small Cities grant.
2. Construction of 37 affordable rental units on the Romerovski redevelopment site.
3. Construction of 6 sales units on the site adjacent to the train station.

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4. Construction of 100 units of affordable senior citizen housing through a partnership with Catholic Charities.

5. Westfield Avenue Streetscape Improvement Plan

As recommended in the New Directions report, the Borough is currently working with the NJ DOT to prepare a streetscape improvement plan for Westfield Avenue. A draft plan was prepared and presented to the Roselle Park Borough Council and Planning Board in November 2009. This plan incorporates physical improvements to the roadway, including improved crosswalks, median treatment, sidewalk treatment, landscaping improvements, signage and circulation improvements to enhance the appearance of the streetscape and improve its functionality.

6. The Economy

Since 2003, significant changes have occurred in the economy at the local, regional and national level. In late 2008 and continuing into 2009, the United States experienced significant economic changes due to the financial difficulties of major financial institutions. As these companies laid off workers and sought bankruptcy protection status, other sectors of the economy were affected including manufacturing, retailing and service industries. This change not only affected the national economy, but led to the closing of a large number of businesses at the local level. The impacts of the recession are evident in New Jersey, where the unemployment rate reached 9.8 percent in September 2009, the highest in 20 years.

Roselle Park has been losing jobs for the past fifteen years. The Borough's economic base relies heavily on educational services, wholesale trade and transportation. It is critical that the Borough maintain its economic base and ensure that there are appropriate areas for future employment growth. The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects that the following industries will experience the greatest growth over the next 7 years:

1. Education and health services (20.2 percent growth between 2006 and 2016)
2. Other services (14.2 percent growth)
3. Professional and business services (13.0 percent growth)
4. Leisure and hospitality (11.3 percent growth)
5. Financial services (9.2 percent)
6. Construction (6.7 percent)
7. Natural resources and mining (5.9 percent)
8. Trade, transportation and utilities (2.3 percent).

The following industries are projected to decline:

1. Information services (-9.2 percent)
2. Manufacturing (-19.3 percent)

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7. Union Station Rail Service

In 2003, the new Union Station commuter rail station opened in Union Township. This station is the next stop beyond Roselle Park on the Raritan Valley line. It is located adjacent to Kean University and includes a 467-space commuter parking lot. It is anticipated to attract 800 daily weekday riders, which should reduce the ridership demand in Roselle Park. With the station's proximity to Union Station, the Roselle Park station will serve primarily local residents in the future. It should be noted that a recent report from NJ Transit regarding the restoration of service on the West Trenton line indicated that Roselle Park was the largest morning destination point for riders on the line, apart from Newark and New York City. An average of 50 riders per day gets off at the Roselle Park station, primarily because of the station's proximity to the Schering-Plough complex.

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RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Many of the recommendations in the New Directions report are important planning issues and should be incorporated into the Master Plan. Specific changes recommended to the Roselle Park Master Plan and zoning ordinance are identified on the attached map and include the following:

1. Land Use Plan Amendment

In Land Use Plan element of the Master Plan should be amended to incorporate many of the recommendations in the New Directions report regarding the revitalization of Westfield Avenue. This revitalization initiative, however, has been sidetracked over the past few years by other issues, including litigation involving the Romerovski site. The Borough is now close to a settlement agreement with the litigants and can once again focus on revitalizing Westfield Avenue. Revitalization of Westfield Avenue is becoming increasingly important as the nation is facing a recession with significant job losses, and municipalities are forced to evaluate their zoning and land use patterns to capture new economic development opportunities.

In order to capitalize on the investment and the spending power of the anticipated residents of the Romerovski development, the Borough should aggressively encourage new development on Westfield Avenue. The Borough has already identified major underutilized parcels along Westfield Avenue in the New Directions plan, including the Chestnut Street gateway, the area surrounding the Romerovski redevelopment site and the area near Hawthorne Street where a number of vacant and underutilized properties exist. Development of the air rights over the Hawthorne Street detention basin should be considered to further bolster development in this area of the Borough. An additional underutilized property is the former Ford dealership site.

The Borough should continue its efforts to relocate the DPW facility to provide an appropriate location for the 100-union Catholic Charities senior citizen housing project.

2. Circulation Plan Amendment

The Borough is currently addressing the physical constraints of Westfield Avenue through a comprehensive streetscape improvement plan prepared by consultants to NJ DOT. Implementation of many of the recommendations in the streetscape improvement plan will require an amendment to the Borough's Circulation Plan Elements of the Master Plan. The Borough should also consider a new commuter rail station on Westfield Avenue, which has significantly better accessibility because of its proximity to and visibility from the Garden State Parkway.

3. Redevelopment of Key Sites

The majority of the underutilized sites on Westfield Avenue are in the B-3 zone district. The B-3 zone district is very permissive and permits a wide variety of residential, commercial and light industrial uses, with a maximum height of six stories. This zoning, however, has failed to encourage any major new development. The Borough needs to put in place the appropriate implementation mechanisms to encourage and guide development of these parcels. One option is to reevaluate the existing land use pattern and zoning along Westfield Avenue to determine if zone changes can encourage new development. Another option is to designate Westfield Avenue as an area in need of rehabilitation and adopt a redevelopment plan for the entire area. This has the added benefit of permitting the Borough to grant short-term tax abatements (5-years) to encourage new development in this area, while also providing the flexibility of the redevelopment process.

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The Borough should continue to support redevelopment of the properties around the commuter rail station at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Chestnut Street. With the opening of a new commuter rail station in Union, the Roselle Park train station will continue to primarily serve Roselle Park residents. The underutilized land adjacent to the station, which is currently zoned for Planned Development, continues to provide an opportunity for new development and affordable housing.

4. Zoning Changes

- a) **Design Standards:** Amend the zoning ordinance to include design standards that incorporate key principles of community planning and design. The design standards should require that new development complement existing development patterns. Connections, whether present day or for future consideration, should always be a consideration. Usable public open space should be encouraged, or payments in lieu of, within all new major developments.
- b) As discussed in Recommendation 1, evaluate the B-3 zone district, which is the primary zone district for Westfield Avenue, in order to encourage new development.
- c) The ROB, OB and B-2 zone districts currently have a maximum height of 6-stories and 72 feet. These areas are neighborhood oriented and the height restrictions should be reduced to 4-stories.
- d) Appendix II included in Chapter XL: Land Use code should be amended to include the B-1 zone district. The table inadvertently excluded the bulk requirements for the B-1 zone district when the Borough code was recodified.
- e) 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 use variances at the edges of residential neighborhoods.
- f) The Borough should revise its development regulations to conform to the Residential Uniform Site Improvement Standards Act.
- g) The Development Regulations Land Use Chapter 128 of the Borough of Roselle Park Land Use Ordinance should be amended as follows: 40-2703 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.

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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). Only one redevelopment area has been created since the adoption of the 1997 Master Plan and the 2003 Master Plan Reexamination Report. The Romerovski Redevelopment Plan, which was adopted in 2007 and amended in 2008, is consistent with the other development recommendations in the Master Plan.

This Master Plan Reexamination Report recommends that the Borough consider several additional sites as potential redevelopment areas. Potential sites, which are identified on the attached map, are located along Westfield Avenue. In addition, the Borough should continue to support redevelopment of the properties around the commuter rail station at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Chestnut Street. With the opening of a new commuter rail station in Union, the Roselle Park train station will continue to primarily serve Roselle Park residents. The underutilized land adjacent to the station, which is currently zoned for Planned Development, continues to provide an opportunity for new development and affordable housing.