

Section II

GOALS/POLICIES SUMMARY

SECTION II - GOALS AND POLICIES SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law requires that all municipal master plans contain a statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards upon which the comprehensive Master Plan is to be based. The individual Master Plan elements provide the means of implementing the established goals. These goals guide the development of the Township in terms of physical development and redevelopment as well as preservation of open space, farmland and natural resources. In time, as part of the ongoing process, Township priorities and goals may be redefined, enhanced or supplemented, resulting in amendments to the Master Plan.

The last comprehensive statement of goals and policies was contained in the 1986 Master Plan Update. The 1992 Reexamination Report brought forward the goals and policies as related in the 1986 Master Plan without amendment. Between 1992 and 1999, several additional goals were stated in various Master Plan supplements. The 1999 Reexamination indicated a need to provide a current and complete review of goals and policies. The goal/policy statements below incorporate past goals and policies and modify them, where needed, to reflect current conditions.

This section provides a summary of the broad goals and policies which guide the various land use directives and recommendations found in the overall Master Plan. These have been based on a review of past goals and policies and include amendments, modifications and new statements of intent representing current concerns as defined during this review process. In general, a goal may be considered a very broad statement of intent, whereas the policies are slightly more specific. More specific recommendations for achieving these goals and policies are found in the body of each individual Master Plan element as part of the overall plan text, map or specific recommendations. The goals and policies summarized below are also found repeated in each associated Master Plan element.

LAND USE PLAN GOALS/POLICY STATEMENT

A. Goal: Achieve a desirable balance of non-residential, residential, open space and agricultural uses.

Policies

1. Pursue an aggressive policy of open space and farmland protection, particularly in those areas of the Township where large tracts of farm-assessed land remain and where open space and farmland of regional importance are located, such as the Millstone River Corridor and the Old Trenton Road Corridor. To the extent possible, maintain the rural and open space character of these areas.
2. Preserve remaining open space, farmland and natural areas in the Township through all practical means, including, but not limited to the fee simple acquisition of lands, development rights purchase, dedication and greenbelt protection measures.
3. Pursue opportunities to achieve a greater balance of nonresidential to residential land use in appropriate areas of the Township.

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4. Encourage the continuation of planned office and research parks in the vicinity of the Route 1 corridor north of the Amtrak line and at other specific locations elsewhere in the Township as determined as part of this land use plan.
5. Encourage the transfer of development or simultaneous cluster of development of non-contiguous parcels to concentrate non-residential development, particularly major office research projects, to free up large areas of undisturbed open space.
6. Promote adequacy, variety, and convenience of shopping for local residents by providing for community scale neighborhood/ village business centers and convenience service areas. Where practical, improve opportunities for local retail and services, particularly in the southeast portion of the Township, in existing centers or designated locations along arterial roadways.
7. Promote new economic development in the northeast portion of the Township in the vicinity of Route 571, Old Trenton Road (east of Big Bear Brook), and the nearby Hightstown Bypass as specified in this Plan.
8. Concentrate large-scale regional retail use in comprehensively planned centers along Route 1.
9. Preserve and encourage improvement of existing commercial centers.
10. Encourage local retail and the enhancement and expansion of goods and services opportunities and moderately scaled office uses in designated areas of Princeton Junction.
11. Increase community cohesiveness between disparate residential projects through the creation of pedestrian linkages and community focal points such as the West Windsor Community Park, an improved Princeton Junction village center, and expanded municipal center complex and through the creation of new meeting places within major shopping centers.

B. Goal: Maintain strict performance standards for residential uses wherever the Residential Site Improvement Standards do not govern for the development of industrial, office, research or commercial uses such that development compatible with the environment will be assured and negative impacts on individual sites and community infrastructure will be minimized.

C. Goal: Provide for a wide range of housing densities and housing types to meet the varied income and age level needs as well as to preserve established residential areas.

Policies

1. Continue to develop land use strategies to encourage development of a range of residential densities and building types appropriate to local needs.
2. Encourage residential development policies that provide a balanced residential character in the community, providing a range of life-cycle housing types.
3. Maximize advantages afforded by existing regional access roads, utility infrastructure and potential mass transit service in locating higher density residential land uses.
4. Maintain lower residential densities in areas not planned for sewer or where environmental, open space or rural qualities are sought to be preserved.

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5. Where needed, amend zoning to recognize well-established and predominant residential development characteristics.
6. Continue support for planned residential development and clustering to increase opportunities for satisfactory housing at lower prices and to protect environmental resources and the overall quality of life in the Township.
7. Include opportunities in the housing program for senior housing including a variety of housing types such as small lot singles, townhouses, and assisted-living and congregate-care facilities. Where possible these should be closely related or integrated to provide stable housing opportunities allowing residents to age in place.
8. Identify opportunities and appropriate locations to provide for lower cost and non-family housing types to provide opportunities for young families, couples without children, and empty nesters and singles (particularly in existing and planned centers).

D. Goal: Meet affordable housing obligations

Policies

1. Reduce dependence on private construction to meet affordable housing requirements and increase use of rehabilitation, regional contribution agreements, municipally sponsored housing programs and other alternative housing as needed.
2. Encourage municipal action to sponsor affordable housing programs.
3. Identify opportunities to meet future affordable housing obligations.

E. Goal: Continue to maintain the high quality of existing housing stock and the character of existing residential areas.

Policies

1. Encourage the development of recreation and preservation of open space and natural areas in close proximity to residential neighborhoods to preserve and promote an enhanced quality of life for all West Windsor residents. Continue to encourage the use of park-like suburban landscaping in connection with new development, particularly along major road frontages where this helps to maintain a landscape design theme and visually unite the community.
2. Where possible, encourage appropriate improvements and in-fill development by relating land use standards to prevailing conditions in established residential neighborhoods. Through such standards, ensure that alterations to existing housing and new in-fill construction are compatible with surrounding housing.
3. Monitor the need for site and structural maintenance codes and enforcement regulations as needed and vigorously enforce existing maintenance requirements.
4. Maintain the quality of municipal services to residential areas.

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5. Encourage efficiencies in the design of new residential development that will minimize public service costs.

CIRCULATION PLAN GOALS/POLICY STATEMENT

A. Goal: Continue to pursue a coordinated road plan, which enables the safe and efficient movement of people and goods and minimizes the negative impact of regional traffic on local roads, particularly in residential areas.

Policies

1. Establish a hierarchy of roads with appropriate geometric characteristics and capacity for future traffic volumes, thus avoiding channeling regional traffic onto local streets resulting in the degradation of residential areas and community centers.
2. Continue to support a system of arterial roadways for the purpose of carrying regional and inter-municipal traffic through West Windsor. Discourage regional traffic from using local roadways.
3. Support completion and upgrading of regional roadways to aid in improving local circulation, particularly those related to Route 1.
4. Limit major new road construction to those linkages and improvements identified in the Circulation Plan as needed to ensure an adequate distribution of local traffic.
5. Emphasize development of final major connections and local roadway improvement to aid in east-west traffic movement (e.g. Millstone Bypass, realignment of Meadow and Clarksville Road) and select key intersections as described in the Circulation Plan.
6. Plan for a transportation network compatible with those of neighboring Townships, the County, and the State.

B. Goal: Encourage alternate circulation modes and networks (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, mass bus transit) to be devised to minimize local auto traffic trips

Policies

1. Provide and interconnect pedestrian and bicycle pathways throughout the Township, with particular emphasis on interconnections between recreational uses and schools.
2. Improve pedestrian accessibility in areas of the Township where pedestrian traffic is encouraged (i.e., train station, community recreation areas, shopping areas) and in areas where pedestrian use is anticipated.
3. Plan various modes of transportation so that they interface cohesively to encourage intermodal travel. In particular, encourage implementation of a transit-way system capable of supporting bus-rapid or light-rail transit to link major employment, retail, and residential areas with train stations, park-and-rides, and other elements of the regional transportation system.
4. Encourage alternate commuter rail parking and rail stops in the region to minimize future impacts on the Princeton Junction area.

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C. Goal: Develop an implementation plan for necessary transportation improvements, which outlines the schedule for improvements and funding mechanisms, utilizing the off-tract transportation improvement program.

Policies

1. Continue application of off-tract road improvements and pro-rata share obligations for roadway improvements generated by new development in accordance with the Township Circulation and Capital Improvement Plan.

UTILITY PLAN ELEMENT GOALS/ POLICY STATEMENT

A. Goal: Ensure the provision of adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment, water supply, and stormwater utilities systems to protect the public health, welfare and the natural environment in a cost effective manner in keeping with the intent of the Township Land Use Plan.

Policies

1. Ensure that moderate and higher density development areas are adequately served by public water, sewer, storm drainage, and other utility systems in an economic and coordinated manner and in a manner consistent with the Township's Wastewater Management Plan.
2. Ensure that development proposed in septic service areas adheres to strict environmental performance standards and follows sound septic management techniques to assure high levels of water and stream quality.
3. Continue to encourage clustering where appropriate as a design technique to help preserve open space, protect environmentally sensitive areas and reduce infrastructure and maintenance costs. Encourage efficiencies in the design of new residential development that will minimize public service costs.
4. Utilize best management practices for efficient conveyance of wastewater; efficient distribution of potable water; stormwater flood control; erosion control; groundwater quality; surface water quality; groundwater recharge; and environmental protection.
5. Maintain master utility plans and ordinances, which will provide cost effective service for current and future Township needs.
6. Coordinate the construction and installation of improvements to ensure that utility services are available when needed.
7. Municipal policy has been, and continues to be, not to extend utilities; developers or individual property owners must extend the utilities at their own cost.
8. Promote underground utility construction and the relocation of existing above-ground telephone and electric lines in selected developed areas like Princeton Junction.
9. Coordinate utility services with other private and public agencies where beneficial.
10. Maintain the adequacy of existing and proposed culverts and bridges, dams and other structures.

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11. Promote groundwater recharge where favorable geological conditions exist.
12. Decrease non-point source pollution, to the greatest extent feasible.
13. Maintain the integrity of stream channels for their natural functions, including drainage and ecological purposes.
14. Continue to design sewer flow based on a gravity system wherever possible and practical.

COMMUNITY FACILITY ELEMENT GOALS/POLICY STATEMENT

A. Goal: Provide a superior level and range of community facilities and services, well located and adequate to serve existing and anticipated populations:

Policies

1. Continue to plan for and provide adequate police, fire protection and emergency services for Township residents. Ensure that appropriate facilities are distributed according to existing and future needs and development patterns.
2. Designate adequate land area and develop adequate facilities for needed expansion of public administrative facilities, public works and other government functions. Particular emphasis should be placed on continued development of the existing municipal complex site and expansion of this area as needed for centralized development of municipal services.
3. Work with the Board of Education to identify potential school sites as needed to effectively service existing and anticipated population centers. Promote the cooperative use of school facilities for recreational and community activities to the extent possible.
4. Broaden the range of facilities provided to meet the demands of a growing population with varied lifestyles, including consideration of facilities for seniors, community and youth groups and cultural activities
5. Require new development to pay its proportional share of any off-tract improvements for community's facilities to the extent permitted by law.
6. Plan for the replacement of facilities that are obsolete or unable to meet future demands.
7. Review and update the Township's capital improvement program where necessary to coordinate construction and installation of improvements to ensure that community facilities and related infrastructure are available when and where needed.
8. Encourage the coordination of emergency services with surrounding municipalities and Mercer County.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ELEMENT GOALS/POLICY STATEMENT

A. Goal: To preserve the maximum amount of open space for the future.

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Policies

1. Public acquisition of additional acres of significant recreational open space to meet the standards of the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan's (SCORP) "Balanced Land Use Guideline" and the unique needs of West Windsor Township as articulated by observed and surveyed demand for recreation facilities.
2. Acquire additional lands beyond the SCORP standards as required for environmental protection and to satisfy open space objectives beyond recreation (i.e. farmland/rural preservation or education).
3. Fully acquire control of West Windsor Township Greenbelt lands to prevent development of these environmentally valuable areas.
4. Acquire the majority of open space lands in the near future while they are still undeveloped.
5. Supplement West Windsor Township Municipal Open Space Tax funds with other funding sources such as State, County, and non-profit programs including but not limited to: State Green Acres program; Green Trusts; Mercer County Trust Fund Tax acquisitions; and the State Farmland Preservation program.
6. Foster acquisition of open space by private donations.

B. Goal: To develop adequate open space and recreation facilities to meet the needs of West Windsor Township now and in the future.

Policies

1. Expand parklands with active recreation facilities to meet the present and future needs of West Windsor as articulated by various organized sports groups and recreation standards. Investigate potential for second Community Park on northwest side of the Township. Develop linear linkages between parks and from residential neighborhoods that promote alternative transportation.
2. Adequately maintain existing facilities to provide for their long term use.
3. Promote recreational activity with appropriate and adequate access by all age and user groups throughout the Township.
4. Foster continued cooperative use of facilities and open space with the West Windsor/Plainsboro Board of Education.
5. Foster continued and expanded cooperation with private commercial landowners and residential communities to utilize open space for shared recreation activities.
6. Periodically survey and update the recreation inventory and needs analysis to anticipate needs rather than react to deficiencies.

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7. Explore additions to the Township Greenbelt Plan to achieve continuity with State, County and adjacent community greenbelt plans.
8. Explore the potential to enjoin Township farmland with State and County preservation efforts.

C. Goal: To preserve and enhance the cultural and ecological environment for the inhabitants of West Windsor Township.

Policies

1. Preserve Township Greenbelt lands to maintain sustainable natural ecosystems and counterbalance land development.
2. Establish an enclave or district(s) for the preservation of farmland and farm families.
3. Develop recreational facilities for both active and passive activities and all user age groups to maximize social interaction, community pride, and leisure activities.
4. Carefully consider the impacts of recreational development relative to natural ecosystems and the sustainability of these areas.
5. Design and construct all recreation development according to all required environmental regulations and practices appropriate to preserve environmentally sensitive areas and maintain or enhance environmental quality.
6. Minimize the clearing of sustainable woodland and trees for recreation development by situating facilities in open areas.
7. Simplify and standardize Township Greenbelt mapping and terminology.
8. Promote respect and knowledge of the Greenbelt and its importance to the community.

D. Goal: To balance the provision of open space with all other land uses.

Policies

1. Balance open space and recreation facilities throughout the township relative to neighborhoods to provide adequate access and opportunity to all people of the Township and to enhance the welfare of residents.
2. Foster cooperative efforts to preserve regionally significant areas with the County and adjacent municipalities.
3. Explore the potential to join Township farmland preservation efforts with State and County preservation efforts.
4. Promote continued development of mini-parks near village and multi-family neighborhoods.

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E. Goal: Foster partnerships with neighborhood and sports groups and other organizations to generate sources of supplemental funding for the development and maintenance of recreation facilities.

Policies

1. Develop long-term park development and maintenance programs and budgets based upon the present inventory and anticipated growth of the park systems.
2. Foster positive community input and support for recreation development near residential neighborhoods.

CONSERVATION ELEMENT GOALS/POLICY STATEMENT

A. Goal: The overall goal of the Conservation Element is to preserve and maintain the ecological, historic, visual, agricultural and scenic resources of the Township, preserve the environment and maintain and enhance the overall quality of life for Township residents.

Policies

1. Identify and protect ecological, historic, visual, agricultural and scenic resources through the use of creative land development techniques (such as clustering, lot averaging, and mandatory simultaneous clustering and transfer of development credits for residential projects, flexible implementation of setbacks and buffers) and other methods as may be found effective and practical. This should be done throughout the Township but in particular in the sensitive Millstone River and Old Trenton Road corridors.
2. Continue to use the local open space tax to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, agricultural lands, parkland, greenbelt, historic resources and other conservation areas. In addition, pursue other State and County funding mechanisms and methods of acquisition and/or preservation as available and practical (i.e., conservation easements, private donations.)
3. Encourage the continued protection of the township-wide "Greenbelt," both existing and proposed areas. The Greenbelt shall incorporate natural areas, stream corridors, environmentally sensitive areas and areas of scenic beauty, in order to visually connect various parts of the Township through a unique open space network and to maintain and enhance the natural character of the community and quality of life for West Windsor residents. The Township Plan should continue to support and increase awareness of the Greenbelt and Greenbelt Plan and its importance to the community.
4. Where possible, incorporate the Township Greenbelt Plan with State, County and adjacent Community Greenbelt networks.
5. Where possible, link small or isolated environmentally sensitive or open space areas with those on adjoining tracts and, where practical, through to the established or proposed greenbelt network.
6. Proactively protect, maintain and expand the community forest, including street trees, park landscape and natural areas, wherever they occur.

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7. To the extent possible, encourage existing agricultural areas to remain. Where possible employ right-to-farm rules, land and/or development rights acquisition, and other methods where practical to preserve agriculture, particularly in the southern portion of the Township where active agriculture is most viable. Employ specific farmland preservation planning to achieve this goal.
8. Active participation in farmland preservation programs should be fostered to retain existing farmland and create a viable farm enclave.
9. Maintain design and siting standards to protect the Township's historic and rural character, particularly in the Township's original villages and centers and along those roadways where natural vegetation, farmland or open space remain. These historic features and rural/farmland areas should be preserved wherever possible. They establish the pastoral open character of much of the Township and represent the community's heritage.
10. Encourage conservation of individual archaeological and historical landmarks and clusters of locally significant historic sites predominantly found in the crossroad villages of Edinburg, Dutch Neck, Port Mercer and Penns Neck.
11. Continue to work with State and County organizations to promote environmental protection and open space and farmland preservation. In addition, the Township should foster a working relationship with private and non-profit conservation groups (Friends of West Windsor Open Space, Stonybrook-Millstone watershed group, etc.) to consolidate and coordinate conservation efforts.
12. Preserve and improve the quality of both surface water bodies and groundwater resources. Examine potential areas for stream bank restoration and formulate policies and best management practices for protecting these areas.